

## The Fiction Issue

### Interview with Carol Guess

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

One of my favorite novels of 1996 was *Seeing Dell*. In fact, I've passed it on to so many people, I'm not quite sure where my copy is right now. The author, Carol Guess, took time out for a phone interview recently to discuss her writing and her new novel, *Switch*, that will be published this summer by Calyx Press. She will be attending *Outwrite* in Boston in a few weeks. (See page 3 for more on *Outwrite*.)

*Ellyn: When did you start writing fiction?*

Carol: I didn't start writing fiction until very late. I was finished with my MFA, which was in poetry. I had always thought of myself as a poet. Then I had a journal entry that turned into a short story and I got really excited by the possibilities of that form so I started writing short stories. I was about 25 or 26, and I wrote short stories for about a year and then one of them turned into *Seeing Dell*.

*You were writing short stories for just a year?*

Yes. I don't write a lot of short stories; I tend to focus on novels. Short stories just seem too small now. This summer I finished a poetry manuscript called *Femme's Dictionary* which I've wanted to finish for a long time. I write a lot of poetry, but not usually while I'm writing fiction. I alternate.

*Why do you think you do that?*

I think it's because when I write a novel I get so absorbed with the world I'm creating, it doesn't seem to make sense to look outside of that world and write about something else. If I have an idea for a poem it becomes part of the novel. Likewise, when I'm working on poems, a lot of times the poems are related; I'll track a certain theme or idea or mood. But because I'm working in small batches, it makes sense to continue that way.

*Was the MFA your only formal writing training?*

Actually, no. I did a lot of writing as an undergrad; I was an English major at Columbia and studied po-

**Guess continues on page 8**

### Juliet and Juliet

By [REDACTED]



*In fair Boston, the scene was laid,  
Where decisions of the heart were made  
And hard questions answered.  
Soft and hazy was the night  
That found two loves 'neath the light  
Of an inconstant moon.  
If your eyes can attend this page,  
The questions will be answered, and the doubt assuaged.*

Ailey never really cared about her hair after dancing. She knew wild strands were standing at all angles and the curls so patiently tamed were flying in the wind, but the disheveledness matched her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. It was a look she wore proudly, proof that she put all her energy into dancing. She loved it. Ailey paused and glanced at the woman next to her. "The club was outrageous tonight! I've never had that much fun there before!"

Kana stopped walking and looked back at Ailey, wondering how she could have missed seeing this woman other nights. She had certainly noticed her tonight, the lovely blonde hair, the ivory skin, the way she danced, moving only for herself. Kana had known in an instant that Ailey was someone she wouldn't let get away.

"You've been to Quest before tonight?"

Ailey was surprised by the question. "Oh, a couple of times with a friend."

**Juliet continues on page 6**

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Treasurer's Report...3

Outwrite.....3

Where the Gods Are  
All Women.....4

The Artist and the  
Businessman.....5

Bisexual Fiction  
List.....12

"Slash" Fan  
Fiction.....13

Calendar.....15,16

*Volunteers of  
the Month*

Jeanne  
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*And many more  
wonderful  
women! You  
know who you  
are! Thank you,  
thank you, thank  
you!*

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published  
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this  
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair  
Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on  
recycled paper

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## One World, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities and the World

Dear Readers,

As editors, we are thrilled to publish the variety and depth of insight and experiences that *BiWomen* contributors so consistently bring to all of us through these pages, and we hope you enjoy the wonderful creativity that flows through this 16-page issue. Right now, we are also excited that the 5th International Bisexual Conference will be taking place on April 3-5, 1998 in Boston. The conference provides a fantastic opportunity for *BiWomen* readers from around New England and beyond to take our collective experiences a step further by learning from and sharing first-hand with each other as well as with other bisexuals and allies from around the world.

With more than 100 workshops, performances, and presentations in 21 subject tracks including Women, Sexuality, Activism, and Personal Growth, this conference offers something for everyone. Your presence will further the wonderful diversity that enriches us all and which you are very likely to both grow from and be moved by. Likewise, each of us who takes part will have the chance to walk away from the experience a bit stronger as a result of the unity we are building, and a bit wiser from the collective knowledge we share.

*So please join us!* We look forward to seeing you there.

Linda Blair and Ellyn Ruthstrom

### 5th International Bisexual Conference



April 3-5, 1998

Harvard University

**There's still time to register for  
the *hottest* bi conference yet!**

**But don't wait too long. Space is limited.**

***For registration information call (617) 747-4451 or access the  
Conference Web Site at <http://www.biconf.org>***

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen  
P.O. Box 639  
Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to [lindab@shore.net](mailto:lindab@shore.net)  
and [eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu).

The Theme for the April/May issue is:

#### International Bis

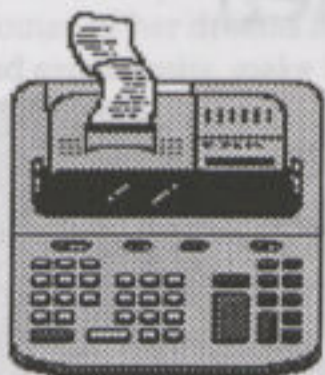
To our overseas readers: What's  
going on in your corner of the world?  
Tell us about bi life in your country.

To our U.S. readers: Have you ever  
lived in another country? What were  
your experiences there as a bisexual  
woman?

DEADLINE: March 6, 1998

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## BBWN Financial Statement



January 1, 1997 -  
December 31, 1997

Balance forward  
1/1/97: \$1,615.39

### Expenses:

Printing newsletter	1,592.45
Other printing	38.33
Postage	218.91
Advertising	0
Merchandise purchased	201.00
Postal fees	85.00
Pride event expenses	243.08
Supplies	150.00
Space rental	50.00
Other social events	40.00
<b>Total expenses:</b>	<b>2,618.77</b>

### Income:

Dues	3,096.00
Advertising	265.00
Merchandise	463.50
Bank Interest	29.20
Coming Out Gp.	180.00
Brunch	512.00
Donation	115.00
<b>Total income:</b>	<b>4,660.07</b>

Balance as of 12/31/97 \$3,656.69

Net change in 1995: (964.42).

Net change in 1996 (2047.63).

Net change in 1997: +2041.30.

**Note to readers:** We're finally back on track! Thank you for your dues and donations!

*Submitted by Robyn Ochs,  
Treasurer for BBWN*

## Outwrite '98 Queer Writers Gather in Boston

Outwrite, the 7th National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual And Transgendered Writers' Conference, will bring together over 1,500 writers, editors, booksellers, artists, agents, editors, and activists in Boston on February 20-22. And besides the fabulous readings and workshops held for writers all day Saturday and Sunday, the annual Poetry Slam will be Friday night and Saturday during the day and the pulsing dance party, Out is In, will start Saturday night at 10:00. All activities of the conference are being held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel And Towers, near the Hynes Auditorium T stop.

Keynote speakers for the conference will be Pratibha Parmar and Craig Lucas. Parmar is an independent filmmaker, writer, and critic whose 1991 documentary *Khush* won three international film festival awards. She is also the co-editor of *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*. Lucas has won awards for his plays *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Reckless*, and *Blue Window*, but is best known to audiences for his screenplay for the highly praised *Longtime Companion*. Along with his numerous awards, he has also been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in drama.

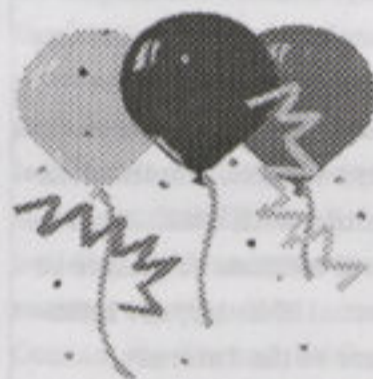
Jewelle Gomez, writer, organizer, educator, and author of *The Gilda Stories* and *Forty-Three Septembers* will deliver the Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture on Saturday afternoon. And Sunday's closing plenary performance will be by Peggy Shaw, a founding member of the legendary performance troupe Split Britches. Her recent solo performance pieces — *Menopausal Gentleman* and *You're Just Like My Father* — have received critical and popular praise.

Other writers attending the conference will include: Blanche McCrary Boyd, Mark Doty, Sarah Shulman, Charles Busch, Jackie Woodson, Leslea Newman, Chris Bram, Urvashi Vaid, Robert E. Penn, Rafael Campo, Donna Minkowitz, Carmen Vasquez, Thomas Glave, Mariana Romo-Carmona, Michael Bronski, Judith Katz, Kevin Moss, Michael Lowenthal, Cecilia Tan and many more!

Pre-registration is \$75, \$85 at the door. Student discount on tickets is \$55, \$65 at the door (you must show a valid student I.D.). No registrations by mail after February 8. Send registration and payment to: OutWrite '98, 29 Stanhope St., Boston, MA 02116. For more information, call 617-262-6969, email: [outwrite@bsef.terranet.com](mailto:outwrite@bsef.terranet.com) or fax us at 617-267-0852.

## Happy Birthday to Us!!

1998 happens to be a landmark year for BBWN; we will be 15 this year and we may just celebrate the whole year round. Stay tuned for anniversary activities and ways that you can participate.



Our fabulous House Party in December was a great success. Thank you to all who attended and brought such scrumptious food! See the photos in this issue for scenes from the party. And look for details of a Bi Women's Networking event at the International Bisexual Conference in April!

## Call for Submissions

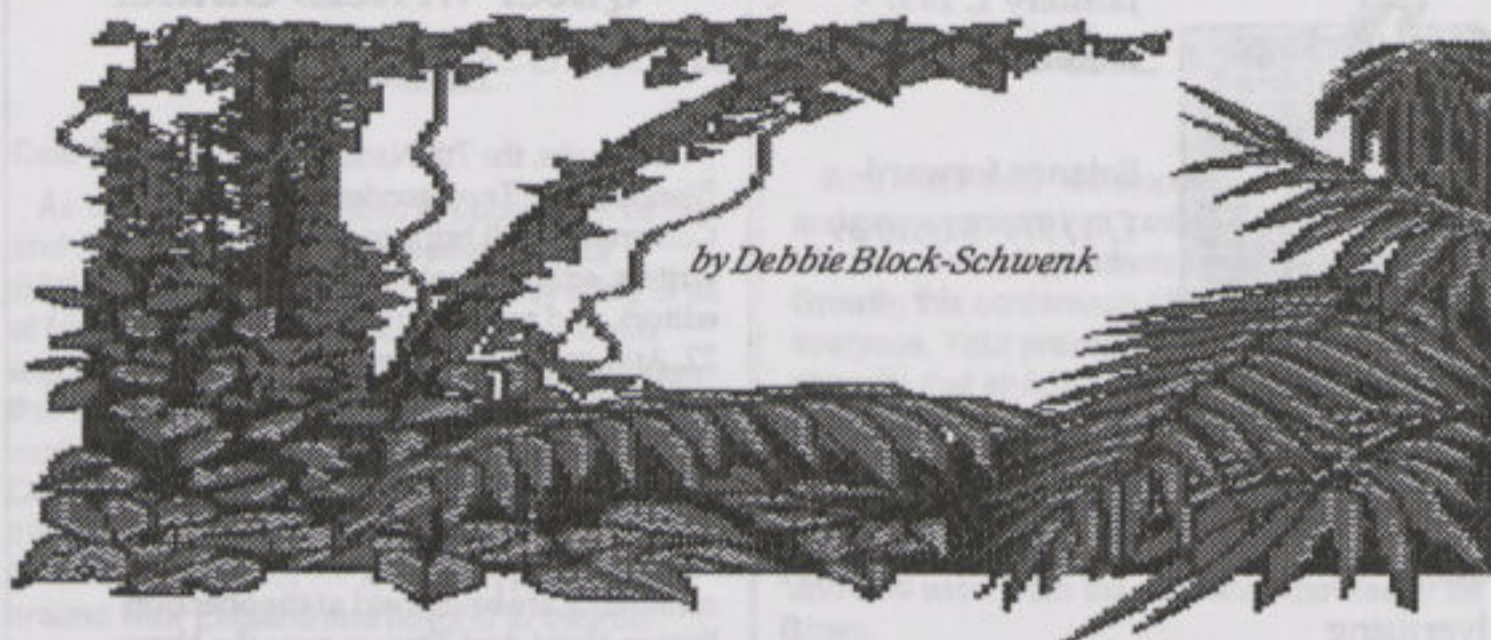
Submissions are sought for a new anthology, "Subtle Revolution: Sex, Gender, And Generation X," that will look at how people in their twenties are redefining the realities of sex and gender. Selection is based on well-crafted, thoughtful writing, either essays or poetry, which shows a personal stake in the shifting ideas surrounding sex (acts) and gender (identity). Possible topics: difficulties with traditional interpretations of gender or sexual identity; the influence of the Internet, AIDS, and/or feminism on traditional codes of mating and dating; and predictions for a new future of sex and gender. Pieces under 3,000 words have a greater chance of acceptance. Deadline for first round of submissions: February 15, 1998.

Send queries and submissions to the editors:

Sandy Ryan, sandyjoy@tripod.net or

Hanna Bordas, hannaruth@hotmail.com, or Hanna Bordas, 5 Brown Terrace, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

# Where the Gods are All Women



by Debbie Block-Schwenk

Allison leaned over the ship's side, suddenly giddy with excitement. She knew it was artificial, a product of the mysterious island they were approaching, but it didn't matter. She knew she should stand straight and sober, like the wizard and envoy she was, but the enthusiasm flowing through her was like champagne. Everything glowed vivid blues and greens and she longed to get close enough to the shore to see the mural of the island's gods guarding the entrance to the harbor.

Beside her, she felt Durm's frown. He was a freelance wizard; he'd reported the strange powers of this place to the Wizard's Council, which had sent her to investigate. Durm had spoken of a mental fog that blocked out his magical powers, and of an overwhelming sense of dread that had hung over him.

"It's different this time," he said in his gravely, even voice. He never emphasized anything in his speech, but she felt his discomfort.

"You feel dread and I feel...delight!" her lips sang as she said it, sent the words floating like butterflies across the water. Yet behind that joy her powers, too, were being blinded, like eyesight is when you stare too long at a bright summer sun.

"Someone favors you more than I," her companion replied. "Perhaps it is because all the gods of this place are women."

"What?"

He gestured toward the smoothed cliff face above the harbor. Within moments they were close enough to see that he was right. The deities for these people were all women: five copper or earth-skinned women with their hair shimmering in tiny braids or woven into thick spongy locks. Five proud goddesses, and not a male god among them.

"Their names are Sheena, Sheila, Sheba, Shaya, and Satya," Durm recited. "And that is

all they will tell a visitor about them until you have made the proper offering to each of them. For wizards, the offering is supposed to lift the spell and free us to use our powers. But the islanders won't say what the offerings are. I could not discover the secret in my last trip here, and so brought this mystery to the Wizard's Council, as you know."

And here I am, Allison thought. Here where the people worship bright, strong women instead of trying to break them down.

As Durm had said, no one could be persuaded to tell her more of the five gods than their names. In the bustling market in the temples' courtyard there were many things for sale, but no one could be tempted to reveal the secret of the goddess's desired offerings.

Allison's powers, like her companion's, were useless. And her euphoria, while more pleasant than his gloom, was distracting; it more than once made her stop and stare at a dusky-skinned young woman selling fruits or tapestries in the wide woven stalls of the market.

Evening brought them back to the docks. Allison's eyes were drawn to the mural again; it glowed slightly, both a tribute to the deities and a guiding light to ships looking for the harbor after dark.

Durm smiled at her. "I'll find us a place to stay the night. You can ponder the mysteries here."

She nodded to him, distracted. She was more than content to be alone with the goddesses. They stood strong and beautiful, each clutching a totem — a spear, a sapling, a snake, a scepter, a gemstone — in her left hand. Three held their right hands out as if to receive an offering, the other two had hands almost hidden at their sides.

As she stared, their magic soared around her, and she flew with it, longing to touch their long limbs and firm breasts. Perhaps this magic

was for her, perhaps she would meet the woman of her dreams here, court her with silks and exotic fruits, make love to her under the moon...

The moon. One of these deities must be the moon goddess. The moon ruled the tides, vital for the sea-faring peoples of this island, and influenced women's cycles. Spirits roamed when she was dark; the stars alone were not enough to see by. One of them was a moon goddess, but which one?

Allison looked more closely at the figures, flowing with the magic they clothed her in. The third goddess, dressed in folds of black cloth offset with silver seams, must be the one. She carried a gemstone; in the day it had looked flat and pale, but now it glowed moon-white with a pearly sheen, suitable for the being who often ruled both the night sky and the sea.

If there was a moon goddess, there must be a sun goddess. Allison picked her out at once, tawny-skinned Shaya with her golden scepter, her hand outstretched demanding. The sun's pounding heat could take away life as well as sustain it, especially this far south.

Moon, sun...this was a tropical climate, there would not be a winter demon to appease, but it would be vital that the rains came.

So that meant the tall goddess wearing grey robes over shimmering silver trousers, arm in arm with the sun goddess, must be rain. What Allison had thought was a sapling was actually a vine, twining around her arm and belting her waist.

That left the dirt brown goddesses at either end, one with a snake and one with a spear. Birth and death?

She had heard that some folks thought that snakes were born from the earth, their lack of limbs due to the narrowness of the cracks they had to crawl through so that the dead wouldn't escape from the underworld. Snakes, it was said, knew the language of the Earth that people had long ago forgotten.

So brown-robed Sheena with the snake would be the Earth goddess. Her right hand did not demand, but held a flower. It is the Earth's role to give and to ask nothing in return but respect.

Satya, then, with her spear, would be death, the queen of the underworld, to balance the life-giving power of the Earth goddess. She was probably the goddess of war as well, judging by the spear. Allison thought the war goddess' outstretched hand was more demanding than the others', and her eyes seemed to glitter coldly. She could only be appeased for a little while, at best.

Now that she knew what the gods repre-

sented, she knew what the offering must be, and where to place it. The unmagical could lay gold at the altars in the temple and be none the wiser. But a wizard must understand the mysteries of this place or set his powers aside while he visited... When the market opened at dawn, she and Durm were there, buying a plain clay bowl that had been fired by the sun. A beggar at the gate gave them a tiny white pebble in exchange for a couple of bronze coins.

They went into the jungle then, searching until they found a pool of water in the folds of a huge leaf, left over from the rainy season or condensed from the damp air of the forest. The stone went into the bowl after they'd filled it with water. They seated themselves by the foot of a huge tree and waited until an emerald green snake emerged to investigate. Then they took Durm's silver ritual knife and each shed just a couple of drops of blood into the water, a taste for Death of what she'd eventually attain. They set the bowl in front of the snake, careful not to disturb the sacred creature, and it flicked its tongue out, tasting, smelling, then with gentle laps began to drink.

As the serpent drank, the euphoria washed over Allison again, stronger and purer than before. She heard Durm's breath hiss to a halt for a moment and knew he felt it, too. Then the spell began to dissolve, to leave them open to the beauty and power of the island. The gods were all women here, and they demanded nothing but respect.

The END...



### Artist from page 12

#### What do you think the artist should do?

A. Take the businessman at his word, assuming he will reform his jealous ways, and turn the mansion into an artists' colony?

B. Ditch the businessman and join the first wife and the carpenter in their flourishing interior design business and risk selling out?

C. Ditch the businessman and go back to working boring jobs to support herself, squeezing in her artistic life, and risking early burn-out?

D. Others?

Please e-mail your comments to the author at [kalamari@juno.com](mailto:kalamari@juno.com)



### 1998 National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference

The National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum will present the 11th Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference and Institutes, "Embracing Ourselves, Empowering Our Communities" in Washington, DC, February 11-15. Established in 1988, the Forum works to empower black lesbians and gays by developing their leadership skills, increasing their visibility, and building bridges between various communities. Contact the Forum: 1436 U Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20009, 202-483-6786 or [Confrnc98@aol.com](mailto:Confrnc98@aol.com).

## Choral Auditions

Coro Allegro, a Boston chorus for members and friends of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities, is holding auditions for sopranos, tenors, and low basses for the chorus' spring 1998 season. By appointment only. Artistic Director: David W. Hodgkins. Prior experience in choral singing suggested. To schedule an appointment at the Church of the Covenant, 67 Newbury St., Boston, call 617-499-4868.

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## PFLAG Dinner

Greater Boston PFLAG is holding its second annual recognition dinner on March 21 at the Tremont House Hotel. This year's honoree is Arline Isaacson of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. Guest speaker is Neil Miller, author of *In Search of Gay America*, and entertainment is by the musical trio Comfortable Shoes. Tickets are \$50, for information call 978-562-5807.

## Juliet *continued from page 1*

"The one who works there?"

"Yeah." She started them walking again; stopping too long gave her time to think, time to realize what she was doing. "The last time I was there I met Darry, and he invited me this time."

"Was he upset when you left?"

"No," she chuckled. "Actually, he was in the process of hooking up with this guy...Joe, I think his name is. Anyway, Darry was a little wrapped up in that." She shut her mouth then, remembering what Darry had asked her earlier.

Darry and Ailey had been near the bar, taking a break from their dancing and flirting. They surveyed the dance floor, watching all the people they'd met that night. Ailey had asked him if he had ever talked to Kana before, but his eyes were riveted on a certain man across the room. Ailey looked past the milling heads and caught sight of Kana again, dark hair shining red in the lights. Her face was intent on her dancing.

Darry finally answered. "Yeah, I've seen her here before. Talked to her once or twice; she's a friend of Mark's. She's nice." For a moment longer, he stared out at the lithe young man he was intent on taking home that night. And then he realized what Ailey was really asking and brought his attention back to her.

"Who hit on who?" Darry asked. He paused, imagining the waifish Ailey with the towering older woman.

"It was simultaneous, I think."

"You go, girl." He snapped his fingers once, then fell abruptly serious.

"Al, are you ready for this? We've talked, but..."

"Darry, I'll tell her. I won't push it just to find out. If nothing sparks, nothing sparks. If something does..."

"There just might be fireworks. I'll keep my eyes on the skies." He ruffled her hair lightly.

She laughed and thumbed over her shoulder at

the leather-clad Joe on the floor. "You just keep your eyes on the prize. Good luck, darlin'."

"You too."

Darry's parting smile was mirrored on Kana's face as she waited for an answer to a question Ailey had obviously missed. Her hands were on her slender hips and her blue eyes were dancing. Ailey missed a beat again, trying to tear her gaze away from Kana's flowing raven hair.

"What?"

"I asked you if you were going to contemplate that traffic light all night."

Ailey chuckled, glancing back up at the red, which switched to green as she looked. "No. I was just thinking."

"You do that a lot, don't you?" Kana was inspecting her closely. Ailey felt watched, looked over, for the first time. She shivered.

"What, think? Yeah, all the time."

Kana was serious. "No. You've done it a couple of times tonight." When Ailey giggled and looked away, Kana grabbed her arm. "No, I do it too. Go into yourself like that. Just get a thought or a feeling and let the outside world fade away, until you're just seeing or hearing what's going on in your head. Nothing else is real — just you and whatever is holding your attention. It's almost like you exist for that one idea and no other reason, and then somebody sneezes, or talks to you, and you're back in the real world, having to deal with real problems. And you move on." Kana panted slightly from the exertion of speaking. Her breasts rose and fell in time with her short breaths; her face was flushed in the street lights. A shine lit her eyes with feline evidence of her hunt for the right words and meanings for all she had to say. It was living poetry, born and bred in an incandescent glow.

Ailey was beyond thought. Her whole body was tensed, caught up in Kana's images of her own mind's workings. She was speechless, only reacting. And then, "Please tell me that you're a writer. That was beautiful. Amazing!"

Kana blinked, startled. "Well, um, yeah, I write. A lot, actually. Almost as much as I read. Why?"

"I'm a writer, but the stuff I come up with never has that much poetry in it. I'm harsh with reality, when I deal with reality at all."

"You write fantasy, then?" They had started moving again, Kana still in the lead. Though no one had mentioned anything in particular about where they were going, they were heading for Kana's apartment. As the conversation and the walk continued, a fluttery question rumbled in Ailey's stomach. Her mother's constant condemnations of lesbians rang in her mind, her own



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doubts and fears and unanswered wonderings making them that much more terrible. The streets and buildings passed unseen, time almost imperceptible.

"So, Al. What do you think of my downtown chateau?"

They were standing in front of a beautiful old townhouse. The carving on the trellises and cornices was gorgeous, details of swirls and ivy and birds and pieces of fairy history.

"Incredible."

"Sounds like you." Suddenly, Kana was very close, and her finger was running down Ailey's arm. "You are so absolutely incredible. The way you moved on the floor tonight, the way the light shines in your eyes when you drift along on your mind's wandering dreams."

"Will you please stop doing that! You're driving me wild!" she laughed, glancing down at Kana's hand, giving all the meaning to the entendre.

"Good." Kana smiled quietly. And kissed her.

At first, it was no different than kissing a man. Just a meeting of lips, soft and tender, opened slightly, tongue pushing gently. There was nothing unusual. Hands cupped the side of her head, fingers caressed their way down her throat. Her own hands responded, reaching out to touch... and she felt Kana's breast. Kana's rock hard, trembling breast.

Ailey pushed away, turning in the movement so she wouldn't see Kana's face and the shocked expression there.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," she muttered, gripping the railing.

"What's wrong?" Kana's voice paused. "Are you a dyke who has to guilt-trip herself into everything? 'Cause I don't need that and..."

"NO!" Ailey whirled to face her. "I'm not a lesbian at all!"

"You sure as hell kiss like one."

Ailey turned the sarcasm right back at her. "Thank you. It's quite a compliment."

The ploy worked. Kana shut her mouth, then opened it again. "So, what's wrong?"

"It's just that I've never done this before." She looked up, the anger fading, head reeling, searching Kana's eyes for an answer.

Kana knew that look, knew it from her own mirror years ago. Her face softened. "Do you want to come inside?"

Ailey smiled, a little-girl smile. "Yes. Very much."

Kana led her up the stone steps, through the lobby and up the stairs. She unlocked the



BBWN "Brunch Queens" Ellen (l) and Jeanne (r) whoop it up at the BBWN House Party. Don't miss the Queen-hosted brunches in February and March. See calendar for details.

Photo: Eilyn Ruthstrom

deadbolts, pushed the door open and walked inside. Ailey followed, stopping by the side of the couch near the door. Ailey glanced around her. The walls were covered in concert and movie posters, all alternative by the fashionable definition. At her feet, a glass coffee table held several sheets of writing. Ailey picked one up, then dropped it hastily when she felt Kana's eyes on her.

"Go ahead. Read it. I don't mind. It's from a few years ago."

Ailey blushed and started reading silently, her throat growing tighter at every word.

*"If I found myself wondering why I deserved to be so different, I shut myself up with a brutal shot to the jaw. Every single human being on this goddamn earth is different. Just because I wasn't with the 'in' preference didn't make me any less or more. I could think what I wanted, I could dream what I wanted, I could fuck what I wanted. And there was nothing anyone could do to stop me. Except tell me they weren't interested. That would stop me. And that would be okay, cause that would be honest. And honesty is the key to life if you're gonna have any kind of real life at all."*

Kana watched her read the pages, saw the play of emotions and understanding across Ailey's face and in her eyes, eyes that brimmed suddenly with tears and looked at her.

"Kana, is it like this for everyone? Isn't there anyone who realizes what they are and doesn't feel this kind of pain?"

"Nobody I know. It seems we all feel some pain when we encounter prejudice from people who don't understand."

"Like from your parents."

**Juliet continues on page 14**

## APRIL 8, 1998 National Day of Silence

On the National Day of Silence, participants on college campuses will be silent from 8am - 5pm to protest the silence that is forced upon lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders. Instead of talking, participants, who are GLBT or allies, will pass out cards that explain why they are not speaking. "People who are silent today believe that laws and attitudes should be inclusive of people of all sexual orientations. The Day of Silence is to draw attention to those who have been silenced by hatred, oppression, and prejudice. What can you do to end the silence?" For info, contact [mulligan@panther.middlebury.edu](mailto:mulligan@panther.middlebury.edu) or visit the NDOS homepage: <http://wsrv.clas.virginia.edu/~mkp6n>.

## GLBT Youth Conference

"Children from the Shadows," a conference for glbt youth and those who work with them in any capacity, will be held March 20-21 at the University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT. Adult cost: \$40 for one day, \$55 for both day. Youth rate: \$10 for one day; \$15 for both. For more information, call Robin Passariello at 860-649-7386.



## Women of Color and Allies Summit

"Linking Arms in Dangerous Times" is the theme of an upcoming Women of Color and Allies Summit organized by the National Organization for Women and co-sponsored by a broad range of women's and civil rights organizations. It will be held February 20-22 at the Washington National Airport Hilton. For info: Vanessa Salinas, 202-331-0066, ext. 771 or [conference@now.org](mailto:conference@now.org) or see <http://www.now.org>.

## Guess from page 1

etry there. Then I went to grad school at Indiana. I was working—I thought—towards a Ph.D. in English, but I started doing a lot of poetry and so I changed to the MFA program.

*How would you describe your writing process? How do you get started?*

I just go. I'm not big on sitting and looking at the wall and meditating. I try to be really disciplined about it and I find that's the best way to produce work. I often have trouble convincing students of this, which always amuses me. They think that if they go and sit in a field for a while and think about poetry that it will happen. I sit down every morning and write. Sometimes at four in the morning, sometimes six or seven or eight. But it is the first thing I do. I write for one to three hours, depending on how much time I have. I'm so used to it by now that it doesn't occur to me to sit down and think I can't think of something to say. I might produce something terrible, which happens a lot, but I don't ever *not* produce something.

*Are you supporting yourself now on your writing or your teaching?*

My teaching. I'm definitely not supporting myself on my writing. (Laughs) I don't think that will ever happen. I teach at a small college called Nebraska Wesleyan in Lincoln, Nebraska. I really love teaching. I think it's good for my writing. I'm teaching fiction and then other things, composition and literature, but the fiction class is really what gears me up. It's great. I really find teaching to work well for me. I know some writers feel that it's a burden, but it inspires me. My students are so excited about writing.

*When you finished writing Seeing Dell, did you have a publisher already in mind?*

No. I couldn't believe I had written a novel, I was so in shock. I wrote it in three months and I had no idea what I was doing. Just on a lark I thought I would send it out; I thought it was probably silly and I'm an idiot but I'm going to send it out. I didn't know what I had just done, I didn't know if it was any good, I didn't think I was a novelist. I had this strict idea about who was and wasn't a novelist so I sent it to maybe five places and they all rejected it, except Cleis. Meanwhile, I'd started working on my second book, which is called *Island a Strata*, and I was really enmeshed in that book when Cleis finally called me maybe a month and a half later.

At first, this is strange, but I really didn't want to work on *Dell* again. I didn't even care that somebody wanted to publish it. (Laughs) But I



Author Carol Guess

stopped working on the other novel, begrudgingly, and did revisions for them. Then I began to realize one of the things I'm still struggling with, which is that I work very, very fast and usually by the time a publisher wants me to revise one book I've already finished writing another one and I don't want to go back. It's a really hard time for me, when I have to do the revisions.

*What sort of reaction did you get to Seeing Dell from the bi community or the lesbian and gay community?*

While I was writing it, I didn't identify as bisexual, I identified as lesbian. So the funny thing about the book was, by the time it was published I had gotten involved with a man for the first time in years and years and years, shocking myself and shocking many other people. So, my feelings about the reactions to the book tend to get mixed up in my feelings about people's reaction to my coming out as bisexual. And they were pretty negative — not the reaction to the book but the reaction to my personal life. The response to the book was very good, it got good reviews, a lot of people read it, I did book tours, everything went really well — but people tended to respond to it as a lesbian novel. It was blurbed that way, it was listed that way, so I guess the ideas that I was exploring in my own life about bisexuality, about non-monogamy, and alternative ideas about relationships seemed to go over people's heads. They didn't want to talk about that aspect of it.

*How did you deal with that? If you were in a room with people expecting that you were lesbian and then it came up, what did you do?*

It was really hard. At the time I just thought I'm a lesbian who is involved with a man, you know, a lesbian who sleeps with men. Which is cool, I don't care how someone wants to identify. I'm ashamed to say this, but a lot of times I wasn't particularly forthright, I sort of hedged when people asked me about my personal involvements. It just seemed too frightening to me.

When I first came out as lesbian I didn't know there were other lesbians, I thought that I was just this weird person who had fallen in love with a woman. Then when I fell in love with a man I thought I was the only person in the world who loved a man as well as women. I sort of had to reinvent the wheel both times. I didn't realize that there was going to be a group of people who would see the book as positive just for that portrayal, and now I feel a lot freer in my writing because I'm starting to realize these categories are incredibly limiting and I've got to start writing about what I know, which is not going to fit in with any of them.

*It's interesting because Dell doesn't really come out to anyone as bi when she is alive and only after her death do people find that out about her.*

One of the reasons I wrote the book so fast is that I was scared and I didn't want to think about what I was saying or doing. I think that Dell was in some ways, not me, but parts of her are me, and that part of her was me.

*Dell is also having an interracial relationship with a black woman. Have you had any reactions to that aspect of it?*

I really wanted to know what people thought of that and I didn't get any responses to it. More people, although not many, commented on the bisexual theme.

I grew up primarily in the South. I'm white and even though my parents are very actively non-racist, my extended family is very racist. I grew up hating that and feeling just terrified by what I thought was the definition of whiteness, which seemed to include racism. So I wrote *Dell* in part thinking about that. And my second novel, *Island a Strata*, deals with an interracial relationship between a wealthy, young, white woman who grows up in the South and a young African American woman who grows up in the North, moves to the South and works as a servant in this woman's house and they get involved. That's the book where I really tried to explode some of the myths that I grew up with.

*If find it interesting that people didn't want to bring up the race issue. Have you thought about why?*

I read mostly in the Midwest and most of the audiences I read to were white and my sense was that they were primarily lower-middle class and middle class; in a few instances maybe a working class audience, but the book buying audience in the feminist community is more middle class. My guess is that people were scared to bring it up because they weren't sure how to talk about it. This has generally been my experience, just thinking about my experience growing up in the South. I think a lot of racism comes out of fear, ignorance, and an inability to voice feelings and anxieties about difference.

I felt like there was this great silence around that and I really wanted responses to it because I wanted to know if people found it persuasive. I was taking on a black woman's voice, and in some ways that is a very problematic thing to do, but I wanted to try to bring her to life. She's a composite of some women I have known.

*And you were also coming from a male voice at times. How did that feel?*

That to me is very easy, sometimes it is easier for me to write as a man. I think that this is less so now—the novel that I just finished is all in one woman's voice—so I think I am moving away from that a little bit. But at the time, I think an easy way for me to describe desire for women was to take on a male voice. It was less threatening. *Dell* was originally a short story about a heterosexual man loving a woman, which was a really easy story to write. There was nothing so threatening for me as a writer, at the time, being a little anxious about my own identity.

*Switch is to be your next published novel. What can you tell us about it?*

This is, in some ways, my favorite of the four; I've just finished a pretty solid draft of a fourth novel, *Retrieval*. *Switch* was inspired by Eve Sedgwick's work. She's a queer theorist who has a really won-

**Guess** continues on page 14

## 1998 Midwest Queer Conference

"Across the Fruited Plain," 1998 Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender College Conference, is being held February 20-22, 1998. Urvashi Vaid, Leslie Feinberg, and Michelangelo Signorile are the keynote speakers. Singer-songwriter Melissa Ferrick and A Real Read (Chicago's premiere African-American LGBT performance poetry ensemble) will provide entertainment. The conference features dozens of workshops, panels, and programs, two dances, a vendor fair, and more. For more information: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/quic/mbigtcc>

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## Graduate Student Competition

The Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities Division of the Society of the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) announces its 1998 graduate student paper competition. Papers may be empirical and/or theoretical, and they may be on any aspect of sexuality, including sexual behavior, sexual identity, sexual politics, sex law, political activism, or sexual communities. The winner will receive a stipend of \$100, plus payment of the fee for the 1998 SSSP meetings, and will be offered an opportunity to present the winning paper at that meeting. For info, write to: Dr. P.J. McGann, Department of Sociology, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY 13617.

Entries must be postmarked by March 31, 1998.

## THE ARTIST AND THE BUSINESSMAN: A MODERN FOLKTALE

By Annie Goglia

Based on "The Clever Wife" from the *Folktales of Israel* collection.

Once upon a time, not very long ago and not very far away there lived a businessman who had lots of money and lived in a grand mansion. Despite his many years in the business world, accumulating wealth and working long hours, this man had held on to at least a piece of his humanity, and was at times, a caring and generous person. As he approached middle age, he finally slowed down long enough to notice that it bothered him that he had no one with whom to share his bounty. He decided it was time to find a wife.

But time was an issue. He didn't have much. Meeting a woman in a random way seemed like a chancy and inefficient affair. A personal ad was too much work, even if he had one of his support staff screen the calls. He was generous but he was also very jealous. He was determined to find someone who would be devoted only to him. He put a notice in the newspaper advertising a big party at his house, inviting eligible women within a certain age range to attend. They should be attractive, charming, intelligent, but most importantly, they must be willing to cut off all contact with their friends and family after they married. Now this last requirement may seem harsh, and you might think few women would consider such an offer, but there you go — our businessman was on the young side of middle age, physically attractive and very wealthy and many women did attend the party, hoping to be chosen.

The businessman made sure that there was a mix of different people at the party, so he could observe his potential brides interacting with them, particularly with other men. Was she too flirty? Too flighty? Too cold? Too bold? He spoke with dozens of women, and decisively selected a sophisticated, stylish and very attractive woman about five years his junior.

Their large lavish wedding made all the society pages. There was a brief honeymoon, and then the bridegroom had to leave on a business trip. He left his wife with instructions to buy whatever she liked and change the mansion as she saw fit, but she was not to communicate with people, with the exception of necessary interchanges with the servants and construction workers. The new bride was enthralled at first. She redecorated the entire house and bought a completely new designer wardrobe. When it was done and the thrill wore off, she realized there was no one to admire her or her grand house except her husband when he was home in between business trips, which was less and less often. The thrill had gone for

the businessman as well. After a few months he realized he and his wife had little in common. He purposefully stayed away from home longer.

For awhile the wife wasted away, losing weight and feeling sorry for herself. She had rooms in the house done and redone to keep herself amused, but she was very lonely. All those months of isolation changed her, and wore away some of her sophisticated reserve. Hungry for human contact, she found herself talking to the carpenters and painters as she became more knowledgeable about interior decoration. One carpenter, a brash young woman, was particularly friendly and the wife was grateful for the camaraderie.

The wife longed for more contact with people and also to show off the house. While her husband was away on a particularly long business trip, she violated their agreement by holding an open house. Many people were curious and so flocked to the mysterious mansion. Reporters attended and wrote about her flair for interior design. Offers of work began coming to the wife.

Inevitably, the businessman found out what was going on, and rushed home as soon as he could tear himself away from his work. He found his wife had started an interior design business with the young carpenter. He couldn't bear to think of his wife going into other people's homes and talking about the intimate details of their living space. He demanded that she stop immediately and stick to their original agreement. The wife told him she was leaving, and taking her business with her. And so she did.

The businessman decided that marriage was not all he hoped for. But a year went by after the divorce and the businessman had to admit he was lonely and not very happy. He had no time to develop a social network — his only friends were his business cohorts. So it was back to the party idea, with more caution. This time he was not going to concentrate on looks or style. He had learned his lesson. This time he chose a quiet young woman with an academic background. She was very bright and appeared demure and shy. She had a background in economics, so he thought they would have something in common to discuss. She was an orphan, so he thought there would be no problem with family members.

At first all went well. What the relationship lacked in fire, was made up by peace and companionship. The second wife built herself a

comprehensive library, specializing in advanced economics. During her husband's many trips away, she pursued an independent course of study. As months passed by, she found the need to confer with other economists about the theories she was developing. She thought it wouldn't break her promise to her husband, as her associations would be professional rather than social in nature, and conducted all by e-mail or letter.

Her academic career blossomed under the attention she received from her colleagues, and she became more engrossed than ever in her studies. She was less attentive to her husband when he came to visit and he became suspicious of her, but could find no evidence of his wife having direct contact with others. She had told him of her academic pursuits and he had agreed it was a good way for her to occupy her time between his visits home. But now it was interfering with their time together. As he became more possessive and demanding of her, she became more distant and withdrew further into her studies. While the businessman was away, she received an offer to do post-doctoral work on her theories at a university across the country. She accepted and was packed up and gone before the businessman returned home.

The businessman felt ill-used. His wives had used his hard-earned money for their own careers and then left him. They had broken their word! They had signed pre-nuptial agreements, so each received only a small sum of money upon their divorce. He swore off marriage, and devoted himself even more thoroughly to his work. Several years passed and he was now solidly in middle age and more lonely than ever. He started to drink too much and think sentimentally about his first two wives. Action must be taken. Perhaps three's the charm, he thought. And so he decided to throw a third party, not knowing what else to do.

In a few towns over from the businessman's residence lived an artist and her widowed mother. Her mother was ill and could no longer work. The artist eked out a living for them by selling her artwork when she could, and working two part-time jobs at a video store and a cafe. She often did her art late at night in order to be able to do it at all. The artist's mother had been following the businessman's social life in the papers and would tell her daughter, who had little use for such information, but tolerated her mother's love of gossip. But one day when the daughter was particularly weary from lack of sleep and boring jobs, her mother told her about the businessman's party in search for a third wife. The artist suddenly got a look on her face which her mother knew well. The mother tried to talk her out of the scheme, saying the businessman had a bad reputation, and his wives must have left him for good reason. What kind of man would separate his wife from her

friends and family? But even as she argued with her daughter, she knew it was in vain. There was no arguing with that look.

The night of the party arrived. The businessman was determined to make a rational choice in choosing a mate. He would pick several candidates and interview them in the weeks after the party. He would do background checks and references. He would find someone who would never leave him. This time the marriage would work!

He entered the room and surveyed the people. One woman in particular caught his eye. She was not the most beautiful woman or the best-dressed or the youngest, but there was something about her that drew him in. As she conversed in an animated fashion, her face lit up with a fierce spirit. The businessman found his way to her and they talked. The artist was zestful, open-hearted, strong-willed. She was honest about her situation. She had a profession she loved, but needed money for herself and her mother, who would soon need extensive care. She told him she might never love him, but would do her best to be a good companion. The businessman told himself she was a bad choice for his bride. But it was too late. He was smitten. No follow up interviews, no background checks, no several candidates. He would have no one but the artist. He even made the allowance that the mother could live in one of the far wings of the mansion, and get help sent in. But the artist insisted her mother be set up in an assisted living near their old neighborhood, so she could visit with her friends. Although she signed a paper that said she would get no money from the businessman if they divorced, the businessman did agree that no matter what happened, the artist's mother would be provided for until her death, and that her daughter might visit her monthly. The artist's mother began to have a somewhat better opinion of the businessman.

Artist continues on page 12



## Jewish Women Gather

Jewish Women International, North Atlantic Region and the Western New England Region of Hadassah announce a special event for Jewish lesbians and bisexual women, their grandmothers, mothers, sisters, daughters, partners and friends. Sunday, March 8 the organizations will present a dialogue with Louise Rafkin, editor of *Different Daughters*, and other special guests at Brandeis University from 10:00-4:00. The conference fee, which includes a kosher lunch, is \$48; after February 9 it is \$55. For more information call 800-232-2624.

Former *BiWomen* editor Debbie Block-Schwenk and partner, Kevin, enjoy the festivities at BBWN's House Party in December.

Photo: Ellyn Ruthstrom

## A Selection of Bisexual Fiction

**Five Minutes in Heaven**  
(NY: Dutton, 1995);

**Bedrock**

(NY: Ivy Books, 1990);

**Other Women**

(NY: Knopf, 1984);

**Original Sins**

(NY: Signet, 1982); and

**Kinflicks**

(NY: Knopf, 1976).

by **Lisa Alther**

All of these Alther novels have at least one woman character who has bisexual experiences.

**Lifestyles**

by Jackie Calhoun

(Tallahassee, FL: The Naiad Press, 1990). Can be read as a bisexual or lesbian coming out story. A woman who has been left by her husband of many years meets and falls in love with another woman.

**Claire of the Moon**

by Nicole Conn

(Tallahassee, FL: The Naiad Press, 1993). A straight woman discovers love with a lesbian at a writer's retreat. Just like the movie of the same name.

**Stir Fry**

by Emma Donohue

(NY: HarperCollins, 1994). Set in Dublin, a 17-year-old woman begins university, and discovers her two new women roommates are a couple. One of these self-identifies as bi.

## Artist from previous page

The artist and the businessman married. It was a small quiet ceremony.

As their life together progressed, the businessman found he had never been so happy or so miserable. For the first time in his life he was in love. For the first time in her life, the artist had the time to devote most of her energy to art and she threw herself into her work with a passion. She set up a fantastic studio for herself, and worked for hours when inspiration hit, even if it was the middle of the night. Still, she kept her promise to the businessman. She was a bright and lively companion, and tried to schedule breaks from her work when the businessman was home. But the artist was strong-willed and her art was always first in her heart.

The businessman's work continued to take him away on many trips. The artist was alone with her art. She was like a pig in mud. Sometimes weeks would go by when her only human contact was an occasional consultation with the housekeeper and she allowed herself to get deep into the altered state of making art. The first months flew by and the artist was happy. She had her work, her mother was well provided for, and, although lacking in certain personal skills, the businessman proved better company than she would have guessed. The fact was, he was absent most of the time as his business often took him away from home.

More months went by. The artist found herself becoming irritable and unable to focus. She felt her ability to work slip away. She knew she must have human contact, but she was a woman of her word and would not break her promise to the businessman lightly. After much thought she sent away for a very lifelike mannequin. She sculpted it, painted it and dressed it until it looked much like a human being. Every morning when she awoke, and every night before sleeping, she sat with the mannequin and told it her hopes and dreams and fears. After awhile, she fancied it sometimes answered her, sharing it's own troubles or giving a sympathetic nod. But mostly, it seemed to the artist, it excelled in listening to the outpourings of her brain and heart. Sometimes she would change its appearance to resemble an old friend or her mother or her father who was long since dead.

As the businessman found himself called away more and more on business, he worried more about his artist wife. He was jealous of the artist's contact with her mother, of the possibility of her having a lover while he was away, and perhaps most of all, of her art. He remembered how his first two wives had left him. When his jealousy became more than he could bear, he cut his trips short and came home unexpectedly early to check on his wife.

He almost always found his wife locked up in her studio, with a do not disturb sign on the door. He was not happy about this but tried to console himself with reports from the servants that the artist had seen no one outside of the house except her mother.

Still his jealousy grew as he saw his wife remained happy and contented when he was away. He knew the artist was clever, and figured she must be slipping a lover by the servants, or perhaps he or she lived in the studio. He hired a private detective to watch the house, and follow his wife when she went to visit her mother. Weeks went by, and the detective had nothing to report except that the artist sure did spend a lot of time in her studio. The businessman decided the artist must be hiding her lover in the studio. While he was away on a trip, he arranged for hidden surveillance cameras to be installed in the artist's studio while she was visiting her mother. He arrived home without letting anyone know. As he watched the videotapes from the hidden cameras he saw the artist talking to the mannequin, which in the film looked like a human being. He was livid.

That night the businessman surprised his wife with his early homecoming, and asked her to give him a tour of her studio to show him her latest work. The artist was happy to do so, and enthusiastically gave him a discourse on her works in progress. Arriving at the fourth piece, having seen no sign of another person in the studio, the businessman could stand it no longer. Confronting his wife, he demanded to know where she was hiding her lover. The artist gave him a quizzical look which just further enraged him, and he started to search the house. He opened the closet of the studio and there stood the mannequin. The artist tried to explain, but the businessman was so lost in rage, he was no longer thinking. He grabbed one of the artists' sculpting tools and stabbed the mannequin. Blood flowed out of its body and it fell to the ground. They stood in silence for a moment. The businessman asked the artist why, if this was not a human being, did it bleed like one. The artist replied in a low somber tone that as she had been alone for many weeks at a time, she found the urgent need to communicate to someone or something. She had poured her heart and soul into this creation of hers, and it was her heart's blood that had poured out of it. The blind rage left the businessman as suddenly as it had come. Realizing what he had done, his face turned red and then white and he began to shake uncontrollably. He fell to his knees and grasped his wife's hands desperately in his, unable to speak. When he finally regained his voice, he begged her forgiveness and promised her anything if she would only stay.

**Artist** continues on page 5

# THE SECRET WORLD OF "SLASH" FAN FICTION

OR

## *What Xena and Gabrielle Do On Their Days Off*

by Debbie Block-Schwenk

You're bored and flipping channels on the TV. You come across some "buddy" cop show. The two male heroes banter, teasing each other between action scenes. They're obviously good friends. They know each other better and have better chemistry than either has with his temporary female love interest. Sometimes circumstances force them to share, awkwardly, a bed or a tent, or they're put into some other sort of ambiguously erotic circumstances. Sometimes they're even living together — platonically, of course — while one of them puts his life back together.

If you think there's some homoerotic undercurrents here, you're far from alone. And if you want it spelled out for you, even in graphic detail, someone has probably done it. Welcome to the world of fan fiction, especially to the bi-charged world of amateur erotica writing known within the fan community as "slash." Fan fiction of all types exists both on the World Wide Web and in printed 'zines, but as a bi woman I find slash an especially interesting sub-category.

Slash started as part of the original Star Trek fandom that sprang up and around the series in the 70's. The first Kirk/Spock stories (from which "slash" got its name) featured the womanizing captain and logical Vulcan expressing the feelings for each other that female viewers were sure the characters really felt.

From those early stories, slash has retained its roots in the science fiction community, and the majority of both its authors and readers are still women. The typical slash story still involves the two ostensibly straight male major characters of a TV show or movie proclaiming their love — or occasionally lust — for each other and proceeding to act on it. The larger issues of homophobia — internalized and societal — are rarely addressed.

However, that's not always the case. With the growth of science fiction conventions, the popularity of SF television and the easy access to material provided by the World Wide Web, slash stories featuring any kind of couple (or triad for that matter) are only a modem's connection away. While heterosexual couplings are now common slash fodder, shows with strong female characters have led to "lesbian" slash stories, like those featuring Xena and

Gabrielle. In other stories, Captain Katherine Janeway of the Voyager series has her way with varying members of her crew.

And one finds tidbits of queer sensibility sneaking itself into these stories, and the word "bisexual" comes up on occasion. Characters consciously choose to hide their relationships from the rest of the world (remaining "buddies" in public) or come out to their friends. Opposite sex love interests accept the situation, show their support, or join in. Queer writers are also adding their voices to the pool of slash writing; issues of identity and oppression are sometimes vital elements to the storyline, such as it is. If you thought there was a lack of erotic fiction featuring bi characters out there, you obviously haven't been looking at slash.

Since it is an amateur genre, and since, especially on the Web, anybody can put up anything, the writing quality can be spotty, the characterization off, and the sexual acts depicted sometimes ludicrous. But there's also quality material by some decent writers, and some sex worthy of professional publication. If you don't have web access, slash 'zines can be purchased at science fiction conventions or sometimes at used bookstores that specialize in science fiction.

So rather than idly speculating about what Xena and Gabrielle do on their days off, why not find out? A fairly comprehensive — though far from exhaustive — web site index for all kinds of fan-written fiction including slash and other adult stories is at <http://members.aol.com/ksnichols/fanfic/index.html>.\*

Enjoy — and remember that if you don't like the approach an author takes, you can always write your own.

\*Though a written, and not visual, form of erotica, varying obscenity and decency laws may apply and most slash stories include an introductory page specifying that the material is for adults only. ▼

Debbie Block-Schwenk is a frequent contributor to *BiWomen* and the author of a male/male slash story based on the *Highlander* television program, which can be found at <http://starfurry.realium.net/warning.htm>

## More Bisexual Fiction

### A Place at the Table

by Edith Konecky

(NY: Ballantine Books, 1989). Middle-aged Rachel is a perfectly ordinary woman who sometimes falls in love with other women.

### The Powers of

Charlotte

by Jane Lazarre

(Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1987). A psychological novel about a woman from a Jewish Communist family. Bisexuality is not a central theme, but four characters have varying degrees of bisexual histories.

### Water Dancer

by Jennifer Levin

(NY: Penguin Books, 1994). A marathon swimmer, training for a race, stays with her trainer and his wife. This book is about motivation, relationships, and swimming, and has a bisexual character.

### The American Woman in the Chinese Hat

by Carole Maso

(NY: Penguin Books, 1994). Shortly after the death of her brother from AIDS, a New York writer named Catherine leaves her woman lover of twelve years and goes to the French Riviera, where she comes apart, having a number of affairs with men and women in the process.

## BOX

an experimental  
Cabaret: Queer\* Bi\*  
Straight Allies\*

The Lizard Lounge, 1667  
Mass Ave, Cambridge,  
617-547-0759 or 497-9215  
x1 8:30-1:00, \$5 unless  
otherwise listed.

**Feb 4th** - G.L.S.E.N. Ben-  
efit night, \$6 "Schoolin'"  
A diverse bill of local per-  
formance poets, visual  
artists and musicians  
support the Gay Lesbian  
+ Straight Education Net-  
work. Participants in-  
clude: Adam Glick, Gary  
Logan, Amatul Hannan,  
Diane Scott, Shawnee,  
Bren Bataclen, Alfred  
Duchemel and more!  
Dance after to House  
OldSchoolStyle Funk and  
Techno - DJ Adrian

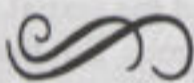
**Feb 11** - Soundstage 7 -  
Seven A-Capella human  
instruments swing out  
the classics - and some  
originals! Son of Lucy -  
w/Ana Borrás: powerful,  
emotional and true  
Gonzalio Silva - popular  
local performer, a staple  
at the Middle East!

**Feb 18** - "A Broken-  
Hearted Bitter Valen-  
tine." Amatul Hannan,  
Bourbon Princess, and  
Rick Berlin - the Big  
Daddy of the Rock and  
Roll Romance Revival,  
and a local legend at  
Jaques Drag Bar! Come  
cry in your beer with us  
over crushed roses and  
torn-up crumpled Valen-  
tines.

## Guess from page 9

derful book called *Epistemology of the Closet*. In that book she has this little list of axioms, and one of them is "People are different." And then she goes on to list a bunch of ways in which people's desires and sexual identities and sexual feelings can be different outside of a homo-sexual/heterosexual binary. I really just thought that was wonderful. It's one of those things that we all know inside ourselves but we don't ever talk about.

*Switch* is set in a tiny town in the Midwest. It's a little bit like *Dell* in that way. It's a town that I made up but it resembles towns that I knew when I lived in Indiana. The novel is about a group of people whose desires are outside conventional heterosexual desires. But it's not just about a queer couple. At the heart of the novel is a butch/femme lesbian couple and the butch character passes as male without anyone in the small town where they live knowing. Outside of that, the characters all have very unusual desires; one woman is in love with inanimate objects, one woman experiences her sexuality as very fluid and changes into an animal, and there's all kinds of fluidity. There's a couple who are actually brother and sister, and I think this is going to be the uproar of the book. I could be nailed to the wall for this one.



## Juliet from page 7

"You've told your parents already? That takes guts." Kana was looking at her so proudly, Ailey hated to tell her how wrong she was.

"No, I haven't. You're only the second person who knows anything about this. No one else knows a thing. Only Darry, and now you."

"And Darry only because he's gay."

"Yeah. I met him, and we instantly clicked. We got so tight, so quickly. For a little while, I actually thought I could change him." Ailey laughed, shaking her head. "The queerest man I'd ever met and I thought that just because we were two halves of the same soul, I could straighten him out like the horizon. And then, out of nowhere, he asked me if I was bi."

Ailey stood, pacing back and forth in front of the couch, her hands emphasizing her words. "I nearly started crying right there. He'd guessed! And then he sat there and listened while I poured out every fantasy I'd ever had about women, all the times as a child that a friend and I would pretend that we were making out, where I was the boy and she the girl. We'd put our hands between our kissing mouths, but I always wondered what

it would be like without them. I was in love with the fantasy, but I hid it for years, not wanting to admit it to myself, let alone anyone else."

"Then, last year, after a few very unhappy relationships with men, the thought of being with a woman slowly forced itself back into my head. A play I saw that featured a woman who tried a lesbian encounter got me to thinking. Then, I found myself working with a lesbian, though I didn't know that for sure for months. I had so many questions I wanted to ask her, but I never got up the courage."

"I could never ask her if she had seen women dancing for her in her dreams. If she had thought of breasts and opened legs and wanted to be there, touching them, giving and receiving pleasure. If she had craved the soft words and understanding nature of her own kind, who she could talk to and be with and never feel used, never feel cheap, never feel like so much meat to be taken or wasted, according to taste. If she had wanted to be protector and protected, lover and beloved, all without the conflict and the trauma. To simply love and share and not ask any questions."

"By the end of the year, I was beginning to accept the fact that I might be bisexual, but I wasn't sure. I never truly believe in something until I have a chance to try it out."

"And I'm that chance, huh?"

Ailey jumped. She'd forgotten where she was, who she was with. She had broken through her wall of silence and let her private musings out without thinking at all. "Oh, God, that's not how I wanted to tell you. That wasn't how I planned it at all!" She stood where she was, frozen in shock. "Kana, please, forgive me!"

"For what?" Carefully, Kana rose from the arm of the couch and moved next to the younger woman. "Ailey, are you attracted to me?"

"Yes."

"Did you want to come here?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

Ailey struggled with her soul, just wanting to say something. Eyes met eyes and there she found her words. "To touch you, to feel you, to have you feel me." And, to the unanswered question, "To find out the truth."

"And have you?" Kana took Ailey's hand, gently raising it to her cheek. Ailey let her fingers trail along the strong bones there, the curve of Kana's ear. She was silent for a moment, staring at the floor, at the ceiling, and then at Kana again. Her answer came, delicately, gently, all the anger and fear and frustration dissolving in a simple act.

She let lips do as hands had, and felt her despair melt away.

## CALENDAR *continued from page 16*

### March 1 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. The first hour's topic is "Polyamory." (see February 1st)

### March 3 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9 p.m. (see February 3rd)

**5th International Bisexual Conference Planning Meeting.** Come help plan the biggest bi conference ever. (See February 10)

### March 4 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see February 4th)

### March 6 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline.** This issue's topic is International Bis. Tell us of your experiences growing up, traveling or living outside the U.S. What is/was it like living there. Tell us about bi life in your part of the world. What fun, exciting, wonderful, outrageous or horrific stuff is happening by, to, or for queers there? Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news and views to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail text only (not images) to *both* lindab@shore.net and eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

### March 7 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity "Create Your Own Theme" Party,** 6 p.m. at Jay and Heidi's in Jamaica Plain. Come dressed as your own theme. Extra points for creativity. Munchy donations welcome. Call (617) 524-6984 or email js@aq.org for directions.

### March 11 ♦ Wednesday

**BBWN Introductory Meeting.** A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at the bi office. All bisexual community members and allies welcome.

### March 14 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Club Night** at the Randolph Country Club. Put on your dancing shoes and meet us outside the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston at 9 p.m. to carpool down to the Club.

### March 17 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see February 4th)

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. (see February 3rd)

### March 21 ♦ Saturday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch** at noon. Enjoy scrumptious food and festivities in a relaxed atmosphere. Hosted by one of BBWN's reigning "Brunch Queens," you won't want to miss this gala Fondue Brunch at Jeanne's in Boston's Back Bay. A warm spot by the fireplace guaranteed. Please bring a potluck dish or beverage to share. Call Jeanne for directions at (617) 426-3486.

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square in Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

### March 29 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1 p.m. Dim Sum brunch, upstairs at Chau Chow City, 83 Essex Street in Chinatown. The nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

### March 31 ♦ Tuesday

**BBWN Dinner.** 6 p.m. at Bertucci's, 49 Stanhope St., Boston. Feast on fine Italian cuisine with your friends from BBWN. After dinner, we'll go over to the Bi Office and get out the next issue of *BiWomen*.

**BiWomen mailing,** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Join us for this fun, community building activity.

**Conference Packet Stuffing,** 7 p.m. Come lend your labor to make this weekend's 5th International Bisexual Conference the best bi conference yet. (See February 10th.)

### April 3 - 5 ♦ Friday - Sunday

**The 5th International Bisexual Conference** at Harvard University. This will be the largest ever conference on bisexuality and the first international bi conference in Boston. With more than 100 presentations and workshops in 21 subject tracks, you won't want to miss this. Space is limited, so don't get left out. *Register today!* Call (617) 747-4451 or access the conference web site at <http://www.biconf.org> for registration info.

## Boston and Conference Visitors:

Get Ready  
for

*amBient*  
temperature

Saturday Night

April 4  
dancing,  
revelry,

entertainment  
with  
Mistress  
of Ceremonies,  
Carol Queen;  
erotica maven,  
Cecilia Tan;  
and much more.

Time and location TBA.  
Info: Hanarchy Now  
Productions at  
(617) 629-4727;  
[hdoress@hanarchy.com](mailto:hdoress@hanarchy.com)  
or <http://www.hanarchy.com>

### BiWomen Subscription Form

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SUBSCRIPTION RATE (sliding scale)

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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

BBWN

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Cambridge, MA 02140

**BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW**

Psychotherapy and Consultation

50 Dudley Street  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
617.497.6581

## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call (617) 354-8807.

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk.** 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### 2nd Thursdays:

**Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group.** 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: (617) 499-9612

**Bi Married Women's Support Group.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at (617) 731-9060 for info.

### 3rd Thursdays:

**GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting.** 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the Bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m. with the theme program starting at 8 p.m. Info: (617) 354-0133.

# CALENDAR

## February 1 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office, 29 Stanhope St., Boston. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. The first hour's topic is "Funny Coming Out Stories." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

## February 3 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807. Theme: "Bitopia"

**Scent uVa Butch** at the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline. This groundbreaking documentary offers a up-close look at the lives of over twenty butch women. Tickets are \$7.50 and benefit the film's distribution costs. 7:30 p.m. show has sold out. Call (617) 629-4727 or (617) 734-2501 for 9:30 p.m. show ticket availability.

## February 4 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 424-9595.



## February 8 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch and Winter Olympics** Noon at Ellen's in Dedham. Dig out your ice skates, snowshoes, cross country skis, and other winter sports equipment and join us for this action-packed event. Ellen lives on a pond and has lots of space, so after we're done eating and chatting, we'll be heading outdoors to play! There'll be plenty of hot chocolate and cider to warm us up afterwards. Call Ellen at (781) 329-5396 for directions or transportation arrangements. (Although Ellen's house isn't T accessible, we can car pool and/or arrange to pick people up at an MBTA bus stop in downtown Dedham.)

## February 10 ♦ Tuesday

**5th International Bisexual Conference Planning Meeting** at Harvard University. Come help make the conference a big success. 7-9 p.m. in room B12 of Lowell Hall, across from the corner of Kirkland and Oxford Streets in Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line. Info and directions: (617) 747-4451 or (617) 424-9595.

## February 11 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.

## February 14 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. We're shifting brunch to the 2nd Saturday this month to avoid having brunches on two consecutive days. Join us for Valentine's Day brunch at Zaftig's, 335 Harvard St. in Coolidge Corner, Brookline. Nearest T stop is Coolidge on the C branch of the Green Line.

## February 15 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Alpine Ski and Snowboard Trip.** Come celebrate Bi Visibility weekend with us on the slopes! Whether you are a downhill demon or a bunny hill babe, join us for a day of skiing or snowboarding at nearby Wachusett Mountain. Please call Linda at (617) 327-1407 for info and to RSVP. Lessons and equipment rentals will be available.



**Poetry Slam** to benefit the Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women with host Lisa King and performance by Sistah's of the Yam. 6 p.m. at the Phoenix Coffeehouse, 675 Mass. Ave. (at Prospect), Cambridge. \$8 in advance/\$12 at the door. Info: (617) 695-0877.

## February 17 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see February 4th)

**Bi Women's Rap Group.** 7:30-9 p.m. (see February 3rd) Topic: "Brainstorming Labels."

## February 18 ♦ Wednesday

**BBWN Planning Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Come help plan and organize our party to coincide with the 5th International Bi Conference and think up some other great ideas. Free munchies! We want to see you there.

## February 19 ♦ Thursday

**Biversity Games Night**, 7 p.m. Come and share fun and games at Jay and Heidi's in Jamaica Plain. Bring a game, a friend, something to munch on, or all three. Call (617) 524-6984 or email js@aq.org for directions.

## February 22 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1:00 p.m. Come share Ethiopian food at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont Street, Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

## February 28 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Pot Luck Dinner,** 7 p.m. at Arthur's in Newton. Come enjoy the food, conversation, and good company. Call (617) 527-1442 or email arthurc@mediaone.net for directions.

**CALENDAR** continues on page 15



## Bi Greetings From The Netherlands

By Maria Bosman

Your call for letters from overseas readers of *BiWomen* reached me via two persons in Holland. I want to tell you about what's happening in Nijmegen, The Netherlands for bis. I'm one of the five leaders of GOBI, an organization/group for bisexuals in Nijmegen. This city is not far from Arnhem, one of the cities that were involved in the movie *A Bridge Too Far*. GOBI consists of about 40 men and women who are actively involved with meetings, parties, and cafe nights for bisexuals. Most of them call themselves bisexual. Their way of life is very diverse: some are singles or divorced, others are married or have a partner.

GOBI has five initiatives: a bi women's group, a bi men's group, a mixed group, a youngsters' group and a bicafe. The groups all have the same characteristics, they come together at homes of one of the members, they talk, and do creative items about the issue of bisexuality. GOBI celebrates its 10 years of existence this year! We have an event on May 16th in Nijmegen with workshops and readings and a party. This is organized by GOBI and the LNBi (Landelijk Netwerk Bisexualiteit).

I find living a bisexual life in Holland is pretty safe, without hauntings, racism, or aggressive acts from our fellow-citizens. However, questions will be asked almost everywhere you open up as a bisexual

**Netherlands** continues on page 5

## Bis Around The World: From Boston to Sydney

Interviewed by Linda Blair

**[REDACTED]** was a founding member of BBWN and is a former editor of *BiWomen*. Recently I interviewed her via the Internet about her experiences and impressions of her "adopted city" of Sydney, Australia.

*BiWomen*: So you used to be the editor of *BiWomen*. Did you grow up in Boston?

I lived near Boston until I was 5 years old, when my family moved to Scotland. After 4 years there, we moved back to the Boston area for another 4 years, then to Ireland for 2. Then we moved back to Boston again and I went to a boarding high school in Wellesley, then to college at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

*For what period of time were you the BiWomen editor and active with BBWN?*

I got a job in Boston after I graduated from college in 1982. That's when I got involved with BBWN. I remember going to the first discussion on bisexuality at the Cambridge Women's Center. There were about 30 people there and it was very exciting. I was working in graphics and advertising then, so I began helping on the newsletter fairly early on and then took over as editor from mid 1983 through the beginning of 1985. The summer of 1983 was a wonderful

**[REDACTED]** continues on page 10

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Outwrite.....	3
International Tidbits.....	4,5,13
Film Review.....	6
Poetry.....	7
Interview: Robyn Ochs.....	8
Calendar.....	15,16

# We've Come A Long Way!

## Volunteers of the Month

Jeanne  
Debbie Block-  
Schwenk  
Ellen Cullen  
Linda Blair  
Lynne Levine  
Amy Wyeth  
Linda Dyndiuk  
Robyn Ochs  
Jenn  
Ellyn  
Annie Goglia  
Gail Zacharias



*And many more  
wonderful  
women! You  
know who you  
are! Thank you,  
thank you, thank  
you!*

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published  
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this  
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair  
Ellyn Ruthstrom

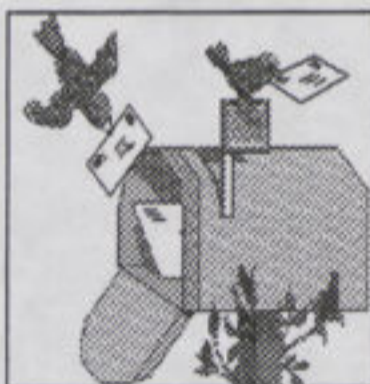
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*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## Dear Readers:

We were fortunate to get submissions from contributors in several countries for this issue. It's great to have input from other bi activists and organizers and we thank all of the writers for their time and energy. Besides the international input, we have an interview with Boston's own Robyn Ochs, the editor of the International Bisexual Resource Guide and a report on Outwrite '98 from Debbie Block-Schwenk. The International Bisexual Conference is happening April 3-5 in Boston, so expect coverage of that fabulous event in the next issue of *BiWomen*.

## Letter to the Editors



Greetings! I just came across a copy of your December/January issue posted on a student bulletin board here at Mills College. It's been many years since I've been in touch with BBWN,

and I was delighted to see what a vibrant organization it has remained. I recall its beginnings in the early '80s with Lisa Orlando, et al, just after I had moved to Chicago and began to launch a similar network there.

I have been happily and visibly "out" as a bisexual woman (now in a long-term partnership with a heterosexual man) for almost 20 years. (Egads! How time does fly. Does this mean I'm an "elder"?)

Best wishes for your continuing good work, and for the IBC5 Conference.

Sharon Page

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this newsletter are copyrighted  
by the authors and artists.

As BBWN celebrates its fifteenth year as an organization, and as hundreds of proud bisexuals will gather here for the conference, it is important for us to acknowledge how far we have come. As Robyn notes in her interview, fifteen year ago there was no place to call our own, no place to feel safely and wholely out as bisexual. To all those who have struggled (and done it elegantly, bodaciously, fiercely!!!) and to those who are paving the way to our future - THANK YOU!

The Theme for the June/July issue is:

## Sports & Hobbies: The Swimsuit Issue

Are you the athletic type? What is your experience of being a strong woman? Has your sexuality affected your sports life? What other hobbies do you partake in? What do you collect besides broken hearts? What would a bi swimsuit issue look like?

DEADLINE: May 1, 1998

## Upcoming Themes:

.....

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

*Sisterhood*

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

*Coming of Age*



## Contributors:

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

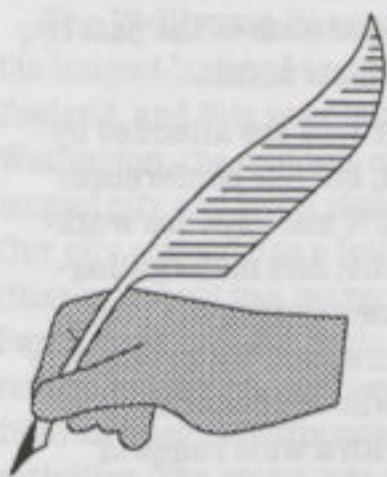
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Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to [lindab@shore.net](mailto:lindab@shore.net)  
and [eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu).

# Impressions of OutWrite '98

By Debbie Block-Schwenk



In the two years since I attended the last full OutWrite conference in 1996, I've changed in a lot of ways. Not only have I matured as a writer, but I've grown more confident in my identity as a bisexual woman. I've also learned a lot more about the larger queer

community. My impressions of this year's Outwrite are completely personal, but since it was a weekend filled with learning from the deeply personal stories of many extraordinary people, I feel this format is appropriate.

The opening plenary Friday night set this deeply personal, yet political, tone. Nancy Bereano, publisher of Firebrand Books, gave the first plenary. Bereano spoke passionately of her commitment to women's publishing and of the dangers recent changes in the publishing industry have created to independent publishers and bookstores, dangers that more keenly affect queer literature because of its more marginalized or controversial nature.

The next plenary speaker, playwright Craig Lucas, told a deeply personal tale mingling the importance of art in his life and in human experience with his disappointment at the US government's dismantling of the National Endowment for the Arts and general disdain for the artistic, especially where freedom of expression approaches erotic territory. Lucas spoke of his struggle to find a place where his homosexuality would be accepted after rejection from both the right and the left, of coming out, attempting suicide and finally finding a calling and an outlet for his righteous anger and his need for self-expression - a need every human being has. Lucas traced the artistic impulse back to the cave-men who surely had more important things to do than draw pictures of the animals they hunted on the walls, yet did it anyway, and lightly mocked his friends who "think poetry is boring" by reading one of Marilyn Hacker's intensely and openly sexual sonnets.

Saturday, a variety of panels and workshops were held. One which I attended was a conversation between Carol Queen, a "pansexual" activist, and Samuel "Chip" Delany, a gay African-American science fiction writer, essayist, and professor of comparative literature. Much of their talk dealt with issues of limits, boundaries, and categories and the way they can be both empowering and limiting. Queen spoke of the recent book she (and Lawrence Schimel) edited on the blurring of boundaries,

*PoMoSexuals*, and wished for a "third dimension" to flesh out the Kinsey scale. Delany concurred, saying that on the 0 to 6 scale, "Carol is trying to find all the irrational numbers."

Queen problematizes the term "bisexuality" because she believes there are more than two genders. Delany spoke of his experiences in other directions, how straight men will relate to some of the details of his sexual attractions in his books and autobiography (for men who bite their fingernails, for example) and will present parallel obsessions, leading Delany to observe that "heterosexuality is interesting" and has as many varieties and variations as queer sexuality (which are just as likely to be ignored by the mainstream). There are, in fact, Queen added, heterosexuals who live for queer theory and/or culture and relate much more strongly to it than to any aspect of heterosexual culture. Delany cautioned that this could be viewed as another "appropriation" of a marginalized group by the mainstream of society, rather than as genuine acceptance.

In response to a question from the audience about the place of romantic love in her work, Queen, who's written quite extensively about her sexual experiences, responded that, for her, writing about love and emotional connection was a lot more difficult than writing about sex. Delany spoke briefly about his long-term male partner, and the importance of non-monogamy as an element of that relationship. Delany also pointed out that many couples fall victim to the "romance of ownership," playing out stealth S&M-type roles without acknowledging the difference in power or what they find attractive in that arrangement.

Another questioner raised the specter of 1970s lesbian feminism, stating that, for all its sexual taboos, it was an important step in allowing women to set boundaries and feel the right to have those boundaries respected. Queen agreed with that, noting that lesbian feminism at that time was in a dialogue with heterosexual feminism and was reacting to it. She said that boundaries are important for everyone and must be respected on a personal basis; that while she felt (and feels) the need to transgress "societal" boundaries, such transgression is probably not for everyone and probably should not be for everyone.

Delany noted that categories are a necessary component of language (we can't communicate very well without categorizing objects and experiences), but all categories are "provisional" and must change. In expanding on Queen's thoughts on the necessity of transgression, he said that for an individual, transgression of a boundary only

**Happy Birthday to Us!!**

BBWN is fifteen years old and we are celebrating! We're having a networking reception at the international conference, group social events throughout the spring and summer, and making plans for a big splash at this year's Pride. See calendar pages for upcoming events.



Do you have a memory of BBWN that you'd like to share with *BiWomen* readers???

During our celebratory year we would love to share those thoughts and feelings in these pages. See page two for submission details.

**Outwrite** continues on page 14

## Call for Papers

Submissions are sought for inclusion in a volume offering topics that clarify, dignify, and /or politicize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Possible topics include: complexities of life in/out of the closet; hate crimes, domestic violence, harassment or discrimination; historical accounts of individual and/or events that have impacted queer community; social relationships with family, friends, and/or colleagues. Academic and non-academic submissions will be considered. Send papers to: Linda Perry, Department of Communication Studies, University of San Diego, 5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, CA 92110-2492, 619-260-4058, lperry@acusd.edu.



## Bis in British Columbia Networking

By Colin Upright

BiNet B.C. was founded as an organization in July 1996 with the purpose to network with other bi groups in B.C. (British Columbia), the rest of Canada, USA, and the world. We try to provide resources for bi and bi-supportive people, and act as a political voice for the province. Our goal is to increase visibility, inclusion, and diversity in the gay, lesbian, trans, and straight communities, and further the development of ours.

In November 1992, as a married bi man, feeling like I was the only one around who was bisexual, or at least being OK with it, I started up a support group for bi people who might be out there feeling the same way. I called it BiFace, for Bi Friends Acknowledging a Common Existence, and also to identify with the Two Faces that many of us have or had at some time, feeling pulled between being straight or gay. (Or To Face how we really want to be.) I held meetings at my home (still do today) and used the BiLine (604-875-6336) as a link to reach those who were interested in attending. I advertised in a few papers and the rest is history.

We added a social/friendship group "Options" six months later, and "BiCycle" (our cycling and activities group) a year after that. After hearing about the International Bisexual Conference in Berlin, and wanting to go but not able to spare time or funds, our group decided to have our own confer-

ence. BCBC'96 (British Columbia Bisexual Conference 1996) was our first. Our conferences are held at the beginning of September, this year scheduled for Sept. 11-13, 1998. With over 125 men and women attending at each of the past two years, it was a success and lots of fun.

During the year, our groups are attended by 60% men and 40% women, but our conferences attract 70% women and 30% men. We are working at ways to even the ratio, and make gatherings more inviting to women during the year, and men during our conferences. We have a core group of about 20 people who are committed to the growth of BiNetBC, with a wide range of backgrounds, views, and ideas in which to celebrate diversity in our bisexual community. We continue to struggle with the views toward us from the straight, gay, and lesbian communities, (the lesbian community is very tough on bi women here) but it looks as though we are making headway towards acceptance and inclusion. We have connected very well with the trans community and we seem to have the same set of struggles. All in all it looks as though bisexuals are here to stay in B.C. and we look forward to expanding our community and dreams. ▽

## Marriage Laws Changing in Europe and Canada

As of January 1, 1998, the "Registration of Partnership" law has gone into effect in the Netherlands, granting same sex couples all rights of matrimony except access to adoption, a restriction that Parliament plans to remove later this year. The only restriction is a two-week matrimonial waiting period. Same sex marriage is now legal in Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, but the laws withhold the rights to adoption, artificial insemination, and church weddings. Hungary recognizes gay common-law marriage, granting all rights but access to adoption.

France is planning to change its civil code so cohabiting same-sex couples can sign contracts that give them most legal and tax benefits of matrimony. The "common interest pacts" will be available to mixed-sex partners and couples whose relationship is not sexual. The pact will not extend rights to adoption or state-funded artificial insemination.

British Columbia has a new law that gives same-sex couples the same rights and obligations as married couples in the areas of child support, custody and access. B.C. also allows partners of civil servants to receive spousal benefits, welfare officials recognize same-sex households when calculating benefits, same-sex couples have equal adoption rights, and same-sex partners are recognized under provisions regulating insider trading of securities. ▽

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# Wellington Bi Women Celebrate Ten Years

By Jackie Bell


The Wellington Bisexual Women's group is the longest-lasting bi organization in New Zealand, and this year is our tenth anniversary! Wellington, the nation's capital, is the second-largest city and has a significant queer scene. Our city council has a lesbian and gay policy (thanks in part to a mayor who, as a member of Parliament, was the main instigator of the law reform bill which legalised homosexuality in 1986) and has recently provided funding for our activities. The group was started in mid-1988 by Caren, who had been living in the UK where there was an established bi community. I found out about the new group in time to go to the second meeting, and have met some wonderful women there.

We met every other week for potlucks and discussions for several years, and have changed format over time to try and meet a range of needs. We keep in touch with our sister networks in Boston and Seattle by swapping newsletters. On the political side, we were involved in the campaign for queer human rights legislation which was passed in 1993. Our group's very existence and publicity helps to raise bi visibility. We have hosted two national bi conferences, and our stall is a regular feature of the annual lesbian/gay fair. Only two of us from the first incarna-

tion are still active, but it's good to have new blood after some times when we were more of a closed circle. We have had a special program for newcomers in the last two years, and this helps women to get to know each other before they integrate with the rest of us. One of the highlights of our decade was the women's dance we held, where the lolly scramble included condoms and dental dams! 

## Netherlands from page 1

in a non-bisexual environment. That fatigues me sometimes. I get this feeling of teaching people a new lifestyle, new values, etc. I myself am very happy with my bisexual identity. It's complete and okay. The best is to find yourself and keep a bisexual partner, that's the easiest to live with, in my opinion.

Dear readers of *BiWomen*, I wish you all a good International Conference! I'll probably not be there, because the flight is too expensive. I was in Berlin in 1996, however, and I loved it. Hopefully, next time the conference will be at a cheaper spot for me. 

## New Hampshire Bi Groups Forming

The Women's Health Consortium (WHC) of Portsmouth, New Hampshire is looking for one or two bisexual women to start a bi women's discussion group. The WHC has space available for the bi women's group to meet, and the group will have access to other resources at the office (library, literature, etc.). Call Laura Jaquays at 603-431-1669. The WHC is also interested in starting up a combination men's and women's bi group, call Bruce Gillis at 603-743-5959.

Hello from Kenya!

We are settled into Nyumbani (the orphanage for HIV+ kids) and are busy teaching preschool, playing games and giving lots of hugs. The kids are so cute — we want to take them all home with us! It's hard being in a very Catholic place in a country where bi-ness is more than invisible, it's actually illegal. Still, we're so glad we're here and that we're doing what we're doing. We do miss Ryles, BBWN and JP though. We're slowly learning Swahili and we're learning a lot about the culture of Kenya. Hope you are well — please give our greetings to everyone.

Love, Carla and Megan



## Safe Colleges Workshops

Four regional workshops sponsored by the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth Safe Colleges Program will be presented in April at sites around the state. These events are designed for faculty, staff, and students interested in gay, lesbian, and bisexual campus concerns. April 3, 1-4 p.m., Conference Center, Massasoit Community College, Brockton; April 17, 1-4 p.m., Durgin Hall, UMass/Lowell, South Campus; April 23, 12-3 p.m., Campus Center, UMass/Amherst; and April 24, 2-5 p.m., Sever Hall, Rm 113, Harvard University, Cambridge.

### Film Review:

## My Life in Pink (Ma Vie en Rose)

Reviewed by  
Ellyn Ruthstrom

I was a kid that you would like  
Just a small boy on her bike  
Riding topless, yeah, I never cared who saw.  
My neighbor came outside to say, "Get your shirt,"  
I said, "No way,  
It's the last time I'm not breaking any law."  
- Dar Williams


The above lyric comes from a song you may be familiar with by Dar Williams, "When I Was a Boy." The lyrics certainly remind me of my childself, a self that didn't want to live by societal gender expectations. Somewhere along the way we are taught what a girl is and what a boy is, and most of us either take on our assigned identity or soon learn it will be a daily battle to fight to define ourselves otherwise. But trying to live without gender expectations is very different from believing you are the other sex. In fact, believing you are the other sex could make you want to strongly adhere to those expectations, just from the perspective of the other sex. (Intersexed people have certainly contributed to our understanding of these gender/sex issues as well. See October/November 1997 of *BiWomen*.)

*My Life in Pink* (Ma Vie en Rose), winner of the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Feature, is the story of a seven-year-old boy who not only learns about gender identity and its struggles, but who firmly decides that he is a girl despite all of the family and societal pressure for him to know otherwise. Written by Belgian screenwriter Chris Vander Stappen and directed by Alain Berliner, the film sensitively portrays the personal and family upheaval brought on by Ludovic's (Georges du Fresne) determination to be a girl.

Ludo's family moves into a new home when his father takes a new job in a new city. His fam-

ily is holding their first neighborhood barbecue when Ludo makes his grand entrance — in drag (dress, jewelry and make-up). At first the neighbors think Ludo is a girl but when they realize his parents are calling him by a boy's name they are all very confused. Ludo's mother Hanna (Michele Laroque) takes him inside to clean him up and change his clothes and we can see that they have a very close emotional connection. Hanna is his support through many of the unpleasant occurrences, including when his desire to marry the boy next door, Jerome (Julien Riviere), is discovered by Jerome's mother. (Jerome also happens to be the son of Ludo's father's boss.) But when Ludo's passion for Jerome culminates in taking the place of the girl who is to play Snow White in the school play, just to get kissed by "Prince" Jerome, the boss fires Ludo's father and Ludo loses the support of everyone in his family except his grandmother.

His grandmother takes him in for a while so the family can cool off, but they decide to relocate and Ludo rejoins them to make a fresh start. That means that Ludo must cut his long "girlish" hair, dress more "boyishly," and see a therapist. He tries to play the role for the good of the family but he still sneaks off to daydream by a roadside billboard of a fictional European Barbie character named "Pam." And it is there where Ludo meets Christine (Raphaelle Santini), a very "tomboyish" girl who instantly takes a liking to Ludo. Whether it be butch/femme, gay boy/baby dyke, outsider/outsider — whatever it is, there seems to be a recognition between the two children of being — to use Kate Bornstein's term — "gender outlaws." And sadly, Ludo is now intensely afraid of that part of himself because of the upheaval in his family, so he fights any connection to Chris. However, an incident between the two children finally brings about a revelation to Ludo's mother and provides a possible space for Ludo to be able to be himself.

This is not a movie about sexuality per se. Ludo is not gay; in his eyes he is a girl so his attraction to boys would be heterosexual. However, as gender identity and sexuality often intersect in our lives, I am not surprised at the intense response that queer people have to this film. And which does come first, sexual identity or gender identity? Does Ludo realize he is attracted to boys and then rationalizes that he must be a girl, or does he believe he is a girl so part of that is being attracted to boys? (I know some girls who would take issue with that!) I take the bi attitude on this, it doesn't matter who comes first, I mean which comes first, just that we have the freedom in our lives to discover those things for ourselves. 

## POETRY

By Vivian Taube

This winter,  
I went to visit my mother's sister's family.  
Way up  
where air is thin,  
but mountains are beautiful,  
there are palm trees,  
volcanoes that ascend into clouds.

My cousin's daughter  
got married  
at 20—  
on her wall,  
picture of Bambi  
that brought tears to my eyes—  
she was so young at heart.

### 1998 Pride Marches Around the World

April 25	Las Vegas, NV
April 30-May 3	Myrtle Beach, S C
June 6	Boston, MA
June 6	Indianapolis, IN
June 7	Washington, DC
June 13	Nashville, TN
June 14	Philadelphia, PA
June 14	San Jose, CA
June 21	Baltimore, MD
June 21-28	New York City
June 26-28	Vienna, Austria
June 26-28	Atlanta, GA
June 27-28	Los Angeles, CA
June 27-28	San Francisco, CA
June 28	Chicago, IL
July 4	London, England
July 10-19	Ottawa, Canada

#### Europride 1998:

July 18-26	Stockholm, Sweden:
July 4	Brisbane, Australia
August 2	Adelaide, Australia
August 2	Melbourne, Australia
August 3	Wellington, New Zealand
August 9	Barrie, Ontario, Canada
September 9	Johannesburg, S. Africa
October 3	Perth, Australia
October 4	Albany, NY
October 17	Tuscon, AZ

Huge Catholic wedding,  
flowers everywhere—  
my American uncle sitting next to me  
in the church pew.  
"My son dislikes churches," he said.  
"He thinks they are evil."  
His wife does, too—even more so, perhaps."  
I don't follow patriarchal religions myself.

Huge wedding reception,  
with cakes, party favors,  
dancing—  
bride tossed her bouquet  
to "solteras"—  
my American uncle egged me to stand  
among them—  
which I later regretted doing,  
embarrassed to think of myself this way—  
I don't really want to marry.

Earlier in the week,  
I'd come out to my family there as bisexual—  
my cousins, aunt, and uncle disapproved.  
I was told no wife of mine could visit there.  
My brother and American uncle supported me—  
even my cousin whose fiancée left her,  
didn't marry her  
after years  
and she had a baby  
had disapproved.  
That night, I cried into my pillow.

Later,  
I told my aunt  
I disapproved  
of how little she paid her household workers—  
the equivalent of \$110 a month—  
barely above slave wages in this country. ▼

### Queer Workplace Issue Conference

The sixth national Out & Equal conference will be held in Rochester, New York on April 17-19. Out & Equal focuses on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans workplace issues. Friday's session will concentrate on issues for human resource professionals; Saturday and Sunday's program will include tips for creating and maintaining employee resource groups, working relationships with management, sexual harassment, deaf-gay employees, employment law, homophobia and racism, transgender employee issues, and more. For information, call 1-888-924-4646.

### Help with Survey on Bisexual's Mental Health Treatment Experiences:

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For email & paper versions:

Contact: Emily Page at: 781-888-847-4458

[bitherapy@aaaaa.net](mailto:bitherapy@aaaaa.net)

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Thru mid June, '98

**Thanks.**

## Women's Fundraising Hike for Stone House

The Elizabeth Stone House in Boston, MA is looking for 100 "good women" to participate in Wilderness Heals, their third annual pledge hike. The hike will be June 19-21 in New Hampshire's White Mountains. Transportation, food, shelter, guidance, and support will be provided. Training hikes will be held during the spring to prepare for the challenge. Participants must raise a minimum of \$1,000 in pledges. Proceeds will support the Elizabeth Stone House's services for women in emotional distress, including battered women, and their children. For more information, contact Beth at 617-522-3417 or 617-327-9254 or visit their website at <http://www.elizabethstonehouse.org>.

## Robyn Ochs: International Bi Activist

Interviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

*Robyn Ochs was one of the founding mothers of BBWN in 1983. Writer, college teacher, public speaker, activist, and editor of the Bisexual Resource Guide, Robyn received the first Reinildo Jose dos Santos Memorial Award for Bisexual Activism which was presented by the Australian Bisexual Network in 1997. I recently interviewed Robyn about different aspects of bi movements.*

*Ellyn: When was the first international resource guide published?*

Robyn: In the mid-eighties there was a bi conference held in Boston. There was a caucus at the end and people were clearly getting a sense of empowerment from the fact that other people were doing similar activism in their own states and cities. At the time I remember thinking somebody should get together a list of all those different groups so that they can communicate with each other. And about a year later I decided to become that somebody. The first guide had forty listings, almost all in the United States. We had twelve editions of the International Directory of Bisexual Groups and I'm now working on the third edition of its successor, the Bisexual Resource Guide. This edition of the guide already has over 30 countries represented and well over 2000 bi and les/bi/gay groups and we're not anywhere near done yet.

*How do people in other countries hear about the guide and how do they get you their information?*

The internet has changed the world. I put out calls for editors and post them as far and wide as I can. It helps to have editors who are on the internet because then we can communicate inexpensively and quickly. We also got a grant this year to mail copies of the Guide to all of the bi groups outside of North America.

*Who funded that?*

CICA, the California Institute for Contemporary Art which has a commitment to fund bi projects. We received two grants from CICA, to send the guide to bi groups and to college groups outside of North America. So we sent free copies of the Guide out to hundreds of groups, at the expense of the CICA. That was a big thing. My goal is to make the guide truly international, not just U.S. with an international addendum, and that is really beginning to happen. There are some countries that are heavily represented: the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia.



Robyn Ochs at Boston's Dyke March 1997

*Are those the places where the most active bi organizations are right now?*

Yes. There has been a historical pattern. The Western European "Protestant" countries and their offshoots — English and German speaking countries — have been the most likely to organize around issues of sexual orientation. The "Catholic" countries, as I call them, have been slower to organize, partly because of a different meaning and priority assigned to sexual orientation identity. In these countries, such as Spain, Italy, Mexico — there is no shortage of bisexual behavior but the concept of sexual orientation identity as a foregrounded identity is not as prevalent. Sexual orientation is much less likely to be seen as a relevant factor around which to organize or define yourself. That said, however, things have changed a lot recently; France now has a couple of bi groups and I just got emails from Spain and from Mexico letting me know of new groups. So it's changing, it's happening, but it's happening differently and I don't think it will look exactly the same as it does here.

*Do you see some countries being more into political organizing and some being more socially based?*

Within each country there are huge variances in what kind of groups exist. In the countries with the strongest identity politics there is more likely to be a political/activist/legislative type movement, but those countries also have social groups. Boston would be a perfect example. We have the Bisexual Resource Center that is very political and educationally focused. And then we have BBWN which is political in that it is a feminist organization but primarily geared towards social events. And then Biversity which is entirely social. A lot of cities are like us. They may

have a chapter of BiNet USA, they may have a bi political action group, they may have a social group, sometimes mixed, sometimes single gender. The larger cities in the US are of course better able to create something for everybody, they seem to have a variety of different types of groups, and that is also true in other countries.

*As we know, there is sometimes friction between the lesbian/gay movement and the bisexual movement in the States. Do you see that in other countries too?*

To some degree I see it everywhere, however, I think that countries which have begun to organize more recently have the benefit of history and experience and some of them are not making the same mistakes. Some of them are starting off being more inclusive of bisexual and transgendered people and issues. There has been a progression from the position that only lesbians can trust lesbians to the idea that it is not only desirable but necessary to work in coalition for our civil rights. I do see an expansion of the definition of community and this is not to say that it is fine and perfect everywhere, because it isn't, but I see an evolution. We've made progress, we are doing better, we are working together better. And I think that the bi movement has evolved, too.

*What have been the nicest things that people have said to you about the Guide?*

A lot of people have used it when they move to new cities, a lot of people have said it has been an amazing tool. When you're new in town, it's a great way to meet people. I've heard people say that knowing there were other groups out there was what made them feel it possible to organize in their own town. I do think that the Guide, as well as being a reference guide (with a bibliography, film guide, and articles as well as the group listings), is an instrument of change. That's really important. It's amazing how many people donate their time to make the Guide exist. Over a hundred people around the world work on this project. The staff is all volunteer and comes from all over the world, so when we get positive feedback it feels really good. All those hours put into it, probably thousands of hours of work, really do make a difference.

On a personal level, there are a lot of paybacks for doing international activism. Almost any place I go I get to meet exciting people who are very warm and welcoming to me because they know I am an activist. I've gotten to stay with people in Australia (when I was given the award last year), and in Canada, England, Scotland, Wales, and Germany who I met through activism. It's a wonderful opportunity

because when you meet people and spend time with them in their own homes it's a totally different travel experience and you learn a lot more. I've never gotten paid for my work on the resource guide but I certainly have gotten payback in non-monetary ways.

*As a founder of BBWN, how have you seen the group change over the last fifteen years?*

I think the survival of BBWN is a wonderful miracle. For a group without a hierarchy or paid staff to have been able to survive for fifteen years, to consistently put out an excellent newsletter without missing a single issue, and still be around today is amazing. And I have a lot of respect for all the different people who made that happen. Interest in BBWN has ebbed and flowed over the years and will continue to do so. To some extent things like the internet and the increased inclusion of bis in other places have reduced the need for BBWN as the type of organization it used to be. I think people are finding support in so many places now that they are not as starved for affirmation as they used to be. Many other groups are in fact inclusive. Fifteen years ago there was no other place to get support. We were it, we were a lifeline for so many women. We are not so desperately necessary now, though I do believe we are still necessary. I have thought about this a lot, and I believe that some of our ebbs are not because we've been unsuccessful, but rather because we've succeeded in some of our objectives. What sometimes feels frustrating is not reflective of the failure but rather of the success of the bi movement.

*What's ahead for the national and international bi scene?*

I think there will continue to be an increasing globalization of the bi movement, again, due to the internet. For example, there is a woman in Argentina (Alejandra Saarda) who was able to get a huge amount of support and information from Australia and from other countries that probably allowed her to feel less alone and more powerful. We used to do things in a vacuum and wonder if we were crazy, but this woman had access to information, and to people behind her going yes, yes, yes. She knew it had been done elsewhere. She is going to be here in Boston for the international conference.

*What will you be doing at the international conference?*

I am taking a rather quiet role. I will be the MC at the plenary on Friday and I will be on several panels. And I will have the honor of presenting the second Reinildo Jose dos Santos Memorial Award for Bisexual Activism.

## Sister Spirit Womyn's Festival

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## About the Bisexual Resource Guide:

• • • • •

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## Call for Proposals

Invitation to authors to submit 2-3 page proposals for articles on Reading Difference: Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation. Articles should explore reading practices in particular contexts — in the schools, within the academy or in the culture at large. Interdisciplinary and multicultural perspectives are especially welcome. Send proposals by July 1 to Elizabeth Flynn, Humanities Department, Michigan Technological University, 1400 Townsend Dr., Houghton, MI 49931, [eflynn@mtu.edu](mailto:eflynn@mtu.edu) and to Patsy Schweickart, English Department, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824, [patsy.schweickart@unh.edu](mailto:patsy.schweickart@unh.edu).

## Kropper from page 1

time in the group: there was so much energy and excitement of us all finding each other and going out together and talking and talking and talking. I remember dancing at The 1270 club, nighttime concerts on the esplanade and an Annie Lennox concert on Boston common. Somehow we kept running into other people from BBWN and BBMN (the now defunct Boston Bisexual Men's Network) and had a real sense of bisexual community for the first time. It felt very powerful.

### *So when did you move to Australia?*

Early in 1985, I was very burned out in my job and at a decision point in a relationship I was in. I knew I needed to do something differently, but I wasn't sure what. I had had a dream of traveling around the world before I turned 25. I was already 24 1/2, so I realized that if I wanted to make my dream happen, it was the time to make a move. After agonizing for a few months, I quit my high-pressure, long-hours job and my relationship to travel around the world alone. The day I flew to Australia, my parents told me they weren't going to live together anymore, so after having given up my job, relationship, apartment and then finding out I couldn't lean on my parents, I felt quite alone.

I left the US in mid-March, 1985 and traveled through Fiji and New Zealand, arriving in Australia mid-April. I still remember flying into Sydney, seeing the harbor and the opera house. Suddenly I realized I really was in the South Pacific, 10,000 miles from home, and the enormity of what I had done struck me. It was both exciting and terrifying.

### *So where did you live then and how did it go?*

I lived in Sydney, where I had a temporary job with the same advertising company I'd worked for in Boston. I had no idea how long I could stay, since I only had a tourist visa and no work permit. For the first four months, I stayed with friends of friends or whomever I met, sleeping on their

couches or in their spare rooms. It wasn't easy since I had to look and dress professionally for my job and figure out how to get to work on time from each new place I stayed.

I got laid off from that first job in Sydney, but by good luck and trying hard, I got another one that paid reasonably well and allowed me to take off traveling whenever the work was slow. I worked there for over a year and intentionally lived very cheaply so I could save money to travel and see the country - the whole point of going there!

I traveled up the east coast of Australia to see the reef and rainforest near Cairns. On another trip I went white water rafting through Tasmania, where I saw duck-billed platypuses and Tasmanian devils in the wild. Twice I went mountain climbing and white water rafting through the wild highlands of Papua New Guinea, and another time traveled through the middle of Australia from Adelaide to Uluru (Ayer's rock), a rather mystical site in the center of the desert. Then I traveled back to the Boston via Asia, arriving a year and a half after I'd left. I saw a lot and had some amazing adventures. It gave me time to rethink my priorities and just enjoy life for a while.

### *What are some of your impressions of Sydney? Was there an active bi community there when you arrived?*

Sydney is a lively multicultural city of 4 million with a stunningly beautiful harbor. Sydneysiders play hard and do not take themselves as seriously as Bostonians, which was a needed change for me. In Boston, I had been very involved with politics, speaking out and putting myself in the thick of issues. It was intense and exciting but also personally exhausting. Sydney was a welcome break from that.

There was no real bi community here to tap into when I arrived. Some people got together to talk, but it was only a few people and had none of the sense of community I'd had in Boston. That's when I started to realize how special BBWN really was. I explored the women's bars and the women's community, but it was not particularly bi-friendly and still isn't.

### *So, after your adventures in Australia and elsewhere, you came back to Boston. Had things changed much with BBWN while you were gone?*

BBWN had grown very strong by then and it was great to be a part of it again. I got very involved and was editor of BiWomen for another full year. Robyn Ochs was speaking on TV talk shows about bisexu-



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ality and I joined in, speaking up from the audience a few times. I still remember what it felt like to say "I am bisexual" on TV for the first time. *Wow!*

I was also interviewed by *Newsweek* magazine around then. The *Newsweek* article turned out badly in that they wrote the negative things they wanted to say about bisexuals spreading AIDS into the straight community and avoided all the things we were saying about completely restructuring relationships. It made me respectful of the power of the media and aware of how reporting is often biased and events misrepresented. Still, it was empowering to stand up and speak out and provided an excuse to come out to my executive father, who felt that I was creating unnecessary trouble for myself by being visible.

*So how did you end up back in Sydney, where you're living now?*

Three lovers I had met during my traveling all followed me home to Boston for a visit sometime during the next year. It was a rather confusing time. I picked the best of the lot, Andrew, and we lived together for ten months then chose to marry in July, 1988.

*You've been active in bi communities on different sides of the world. How are the two places different? How are they similar?*

I have never seen another bi group that compared with the energy or the numbers of people in BBWN. I had thought I'd magically find another group to take part in here, but it just doesn't exist. Appreciate what you have!! The attitudes towards sexuality and sex roles are very different in Australia than in the US. I couldn't say it is better or worse, just very different. Australia has had a reasonable selection of top female politicians over the last 10 years and they are not always judged on their looks. Women do not need to wear male-looking power suits in politics or business here and are allowed to wear a feminine dress and still be respected. I remember seeing businesswomen going bare-legged in the summer and *not* wearing stockings for the first time and being quite surprised and delighted compared to the conservative dress sense of Boston where that would not be OK.

Men and women socialize separately more than my friends did in the US and people talk much less frankly about relationships and their personal lives. No parading your troubles on the Oprah Winfrey Show for Australians! They see that sort of self-revelation as an inappropriate indulgence and an embarrassing weakness. Similarly, it is rare for Australians to admit to going to counseling on relationship issues; this would be an admission of being sick. I do think Americans can go overboard in parading personal troubles, but I also see the Australian attitude as very limiting. Counseling can be very useful to sort out issues with the



*A gang o' bi women enjoying a brisk walk in the woods at Brunch Queen Ellen's "Winter Olympics" February Brunch.*

Photo: Janice Philpot

least amount of hurt on both sides and the airing of many possibilities neither may have considered. Here there is the feeling you should just get on with your life without wallowing in emotional issues.

For my first few years here I found this reticence to discuss personal issues distressing. It seemed like few of my friendships were as intimate as I was used to. It did take much more time to become close. There is a certain residue of British reserve here. On the flip side, when you are offered confidences, they mean something and are precious. In the US such confidences may be given without much sense of intimacy in a friendship.

*Is there much acceptance and inclusiveness of bis in Australian queer groups and communities?*

I don't think there is the same level of awareness in the gay and lesbian community here about the concerns of bisexuals as there is in the US. Since bisexuals have not been as visible or organized here, the community has not been forced to acknowledge us as much. Certainly there are several individuals around Australia who regularly speak out on bisexual issues, particularly when we are ignored or denigrated. However, there is more work to do. I don't feel there is all that much inclusiveness, particularly in the lesbian community. I tried to get more involved in the first few years I was here, but now that I am in a monogamous relationship with a man, I don't feel as welcome, or quite honestly, as needy of their acceptance. I am myself and they can take it or leave it.

*What are some of your high points around bi activism?*

**Kropper** continues on page 12

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## Call for Papers:

The Sixth Annual Lavender Languages/Linguistics Conference is being held on September 11-13 at American University, Washington, DC. Abstracts (100-150 words) for presentations, panels, and special events at the conference are being sought. Panels already being developed include: issues in studying bisexual and transgendered languages, lavender issues in ESL classrooms, and recovering lavender messages in 19th century texts. Abstract deadline: April 15. Email [wlm@american.edu](mailto:wlm@american.edu) or call 202-885-1831 for more information.

## Kropper *continued from page 11*

The first March on Washington, DC for Gay, Lesbian (and Bisexual) rights on October 11, 1987, was incredible. That was the real high point of all my years of activism. The thousands and thousands of people there for the march basically took over the city. I have never felt so safe and supported in a crowd! We were singing and chanting together in the streets and on the subways. Many bisexual people from Boston and around the US went to the march and came together there. It was incredible to watch people march by for five hours and know we all supported the same goals! (at least generally!). Petty politics within the community were temporarily forgotten. It was phenomenal to see so many people together.

*I know that Sydney's Mardi Gras celebration each year is just about the biggest gay party anywhere. Can you tell us more about it?*

Sydney's Mardi Gras Celebration is quite unique. It has elements of Gay Pride in that it is a political statement and many issues are raised by the banners carried by various groups marching by on floats in the parade. But it is also a huge, visible, hedonistic party and celebration of the gay, lesbian, and bi community. Thousands of people come from overseas to take part and to watch. (Last year's crowd was estimated at 600,000.) The parade is at night with lights, music, and exotic costumes and body paint. I have been in three or four parades and designed the float for the Sydney Bisexual

Network for the last two parades. It is now televised on mainstream TV and many people not involved with the gay community watch it just to see the spectacle.

Many of the 270 organized groups of marchers or floats have a playful, even sarcastic sense of humor which is and quite characteristic of Australia. Some mainstream politicians have marched in the parade because it has become so big they cannot afford not to! Unpopular (that is, homophobic) politicians are publicly ridiculed in caricatures on floats in quite daring and delicious ways. I am amazed what they get away with sometimes!!! The gay community can also laugh at itself, which is a healthy sign. The Mardi Gras is definitely worth a trip around the world and the local bi group is always happy to have extra people marching with them. It would be terrific to see people here and show off Sydney, my adopted city.

My work for Mardi Gras was acknowledged at last year's Australian Bisexual Network's Annual Conference on Bisexuality. It is reassuring to know that through all the people politics and hard work, what you do does make a difference! Robyn Ochs was honored with an award at that conference to acknowledge all the work she has done over the last 15 years as a bisexual activist. I was delighted to see her work acknowledged so that people here can take heart from what she has done and from advances made around the world.

*So, do you still subscribe to BiWomen? How has the newsletter changed in your perception?*

I no longer subscribe to *BiWomen*, though I do like to hear the news. Most of the people I worked with in the group have moved on or just aren't involved on a regular basis. I still have a special fondness for BBWN because it is unique as a group. Many larger cities than Boston, such as New York or Sydney have never spawned as large or as vital a group as Boston has. The newsletter has become much more professional than when I produced it when desktop publishing was just new. I am delighted to see it prosper.

*So what are you up to when you're not busy organizing Mardi Gras or involved with bi activism?*

Professionally, I work as an artist, selling work through galleries, and a writer of both magazine articles and of three books on art and craft. I also teach various art workshops on hand paper making, mask making, and hand bookbinding. Also, after years of thinking about it and wondering what it would do to my career, I am pregnant with my first child (due April 16). Just like other things in my life, I see the challenge in integrating new things in my life while still being true to myself. It will be another adventure!



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## New Zealand Prime Minister Attends Pride March

February 21, New Zealand Prime Minister Jenny Shipley became the first head of state to attend the annual HERO pride march in Auckland. Shipley said, "I welcome the diversity of our New Zealand community today. All New Zealanders have a right to celebrate their own culture in their own way."

Shipley's support was particularly important this year because the Auckland City Council had refused to provide its customary funding for the event. She took some flack from city councillors after the march, but the Prime Minister's spokesperson called her attendance, "no big deal...given that the HERO parade is promoting HIV and AIDS awareness, which is an issue that [the Prime Minister] has been actively involved in, particularly during her time as health minister."

## Panamanian Gays Start Their Own Political Party



The Association of Panamanian Homosexuals launched their own political party in February, saying it represents 75,000 citizens and has "the numbers necessary to constitute a powerful political force to compete against the [ruling] Democratic Revolutionary Party and the [opposition] Arnulfista Party." Spokesperson for the group, Lloyd Gamez, advocated for the creation of a zone in Panama City where gays and transgendered people can conduct commercial and recreational activities without interference.

Also in Panama, the gay AIDS organization PROBIDSIDA is seeking international attention in its fight to force Panama's socialized medical system to pay for HIV drugs. Costa Rican gay organizations recently won that battle. For more information about how you can help in this effort, contact Norma de Quintero at [nquinter@pananet.com](mailto:nquinter@pananet.com).

## Mexican Bisexual Women Work Within the Gay Movement

By Angelica and Susana

We are a Mexican group of bisexual women and we work in favor of acknowledging our identity inside the gay and lesbian movement. The name of our group is "Taller Reflexivo de Mujeres Bisexuales (TREMUB)."

At the present time and since our beginnings in 1996, we collaborate in the main Mexican Lesbian group, "El Closet de Sor Juana," a feminist organization that fights in favor of the human rights of women with a different sexual orientation from heterosexual. Our goal as TREMUB has been to open the eyes of our fellow women and show them that our sexual orientation is a real option of multiple far-reaching objectives.

We believe that we do not yet have our own strength and that is because a Mexican bisexual movement does not yet exist. Our job is just beginning and we confront different obstacles such as getting information from other sources. Our lack of economic resources impedes us from communicating via e-mail, so we will network with other organizations through the mail.

## Trans Woman Honored by New Zealand Government

New Zealand's "Tranny Granny" became the first transsexual to be made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for service to the community. Jacqui Grant was honored by the government for her work with young people, including having fostered more than 50 children over the past eighteen years. Grant has lived as a woman for over 25 years and is thought to be the only transsexual approved for fostering by the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service. She also runs courses for children with behavioral problems and found Moana Zoo, a 50-acre home for endangered animals.

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## Call for Papers

**We All Live With AIDS: Testimonies from the AIDS Generation.** Submissions are sought for anthology by writers who grew up in the 1980s and 90s and do not know what it's like to live an adolescence or adulthood in a world without AIDS. From a variety of sexualities, races and ethnicities, social classes and other societal divisions, AIDS effects everyone; this anthology seeks to explore the range of effects for an entire generation. For more information or to send essays by July 31, 1998 to: Nels Highberg, 442 Wetmore Road, Columbus, OH 43214, [highberg.1@osu.edu](mailto:highberg.1@osu.edu).

@osu.edu.

## Bis Needed for Health Access Focus Group

Bisexuals and trans people are needed to participate in a focus group regarding health care needs, issues and barriers to accessing health care. Lesbians and gay men of color are also being sought to participate. A stipend of \$40 will be paid to each person who participates in the 2-hour focus group. Please call JSI Research & Training and ask for either Gary Fallas or Julie Ray at (617) 482-9485 to learn more about the groups.

## Outwrite from page 3

becomes necessary when he/she feels that, "I hurt because I can't talk about ..."

Later on Saturday, I attended a panel on the uses of autobiography in writing. While all the panelists (among them Queen and Delany), agreed that using autobiographical material was useful and important, special issues of sensitivity and revealing someone's identity can come up when dealing with explicitly queer material. Issues with homophobic family members can also surface when writing specifically autobiographical material that are not as immediate in writing fiction.

Next I attended a panel entitled "The Silence at the Center: Queer Masculinity." Moderated by Laurie Toby Edison, a photographer working on a book of photos of "real men" (i.e., men who don't meet one aesthetic standard), four queer men spoke about their views on masculinity and physical beauty. While I've heard some criticism of OutWrite for not presenting diverse points of view, this panel presented a wide range of viewpoints. While one panelist asserted that queer men's obsession with fitness, physical beauty and promiscuity led to shallowness, burn-out and the risk of AIDS, other men spoke of the importance of beauty and the naturalness of desiring the beautiful. A panelist who'd done a book on the history of male photographic images made the fascinating point that, while images of female beauty have changed radically over the decades, male images of beauty have remained basically the same. One panelist asserted that many of the problems we attributed to heterosexual male culture were problems with American culture. He also took the approach that, rather than attributing our obsessions with beauty and sexuality to internalized homophobia or a misplaced desire for community, these are human problems; it is the essence of being a human being to long for beauty, to desire to and want to be desired, to be insecure about our place in the universe, and to be desperate for a place to belong.

Although we weren't pre-assigned a slot, a Bisexual Caucus was held Saturday evening. While we spoke of some frustration regarding a lack of bi-focused material, attendees agreed that the atmosphere was generally bi-friendly, especially compared to OutWrites of the past. Wayne Bryant and others spoke about the international conference in April; Hannah Dorress visited to advertise her multimedia event taking place the Saturday night of the bi conference, and Tristan Taormino, Editor of the Best Lesbian Erotica series, also dropped by to encourage bi (and other non-lesbian oriented) submissions. Participants agreed there should be more panels and workshops with specific bi themes at future Outwrites.

Sunday morning I attended the closest thing to a bi-oriented panel, charmingly titled, "Invisible

Ink." Biversity Boston's own Wayne Bryant was one of the panelists, speaking about the process of getting his book, *Bisexual Characters in Film*, published and the difficulty in getting attention from the gay press. Laura Antoniou, whose S&M novels cross gender and orientation lines, spoke of the difficulty of getting on the shelf in gay bookstores where the shelf space is usually divided into the "gay male" and the "lesbian" sections. Antoniou said that, despite a complete lack of coverage in the gay press due to the nature of her material, her books sell well, partly due to the fact that large chain bookstores like Borders will carry them and partly due to the success of new on-line publishing. The third panelist, Veronica Vera, author of *Miss Vera's Finishing School for Boys Who Want to be Girls* (and a founder of an actual school for the same name) spoke about networking, using the press, and the issues around marketing a book whose suggested categories were Gender Studies/Health and Beauty.

The last notable panel which I attended was on Queer Progressive Media. Panelists and audience members alike bemoaned the fact that it tends to be the white conservative gay men who are quoted in the mainstream press and are represented as speaking for the gay community. The increasing control of information by huge media monopolies and the effective death of true investigative journalism were cited as huge problems confronting the entire culture but of special importance to the queer community. One solution to some of these large scale problems is the formation of an independent press association, but the editor of *Gay Community News* noted that her publication was the only queer publication attending the initial meetings of this association (and the *Sojourner* representative the only specifically feminist publication). "Zine culture and a focus on grass roots organizing were presented as two solutions to the problems with "mainstream queer" publications. Another issue that was pointed out was that while the right-wing foundations have been funding both publications and multi-year, multi-issue campaigns, the progressive foundations only fund single-issue, one-year projects. A net result of years of this approach is a broad-based and articulate right wing with publications to back up its agenda in the mainstream culture while progressive groups flounder.

From the personal to the political, I left OutWrite inspired by the examples of the many queer activists and writers I heard tell their stories, and challenged by the work left to be done. I urge any of you interested in queer writing, film, culture, or politics to attend the next OutWrite conference in 1999. For more information, contact: Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, 29 Stanhope St., Boston, MA, 02116, 617-262-6969, outwrite@terranet.com.



**April 22 ♦ Wednesday**

**BBWN Planning Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at Ellyn's in Medford. *This is BBWN's 15th Anniversary so let's plan a biiiig party!* Maybe a float in the Pride Parade! If we start planning *now* we can have an *awesome* spring and summer of celebration. Call Ellyn at (781) 393-9103 for directions or to arrange for a ride from the Davis Sq. T station

**April 25 ♦ Saturday**

**BBWN Potluck Brunch.** Noon at Linda's in Roslindale. Bring a tasty treat and a friend or two. After brunch, we can go for a walk in the Arboretum and see what's blooming. T accessible. Call Linda at (617) 327-1407 for info and directions. All self-identified women are welcome.

**"Swingtime"** swing and ballroom dance for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends at Ballet ETC, 185 Corey Rd., at the corner of Corey Rd and Westbourne Terrace, Brookline. Smoke and alcohol free. \$6 admission includes a free beginners swing lesson at 8 p.m. Dancing to DJ from 9-11:30 p.m. Info: (617) 739-9930.

**April 26 ♦ Sunday**

**Biversity Boston Brunch.** 1pm at Mucho Gusto, 1174 Boylston Street (near Mass. Ave). The nearest T stop is Auditorium on the Green Line.

**May 1 ♦ Friday**

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline** for "Sports and Hobbies: The Swimsuit Issue." Are sports a big part of your life or do they give you the willies? Why? What kind of hobbies are you into? Write and tell us. Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news and views to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail text only (not images) to *both* lindab@shore.net and eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

**May 3 ♦ Sunday**

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office, 29 Stanhope St., Boston. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. The first hour's topic is "Stupid Parent Tricks." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

**May 5 ♦ Tuesday**

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9p.m. (see April 7th)

**May 6 ♦ Wednesday**

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see April 1st)

**May 13 ♦ Wednesday**

**BBWN Introductory Meeting.** A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at the bi office. All bisexual community members and allies welcome.

**May 16 ♦ Saturday**

**Biversity Boston Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

**Biversity Boston Party.** 6 p.m. - midnight at Jay & Heidi's in Jamaica Plain. All are encouraged to dress up as the historical figure or ice cream flavor of your choice. Info: email *rsvp@aq.org* or call (617) 524-6984.

**May 17 ♦ Sunday**

**BBWN Picnic Brunch** at noon. It's Lilac Sunday in the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, so let's enjoy the beautiful fragrances and colors of spring together. Please bring some food or a beverage to share, and a plate, cup and utensils for yourself. Meet at the main entrance to the Arboretum, just in front of the visitor's center. For rain location/info call Kate or Gene at (617) 522-8085. All women welcome.

**May 19 ♦ Tuesday**

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see April 1st)

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. (see April 7th)

**May 26 ♦ Tuesday**

**BBWN Dinner.** 6 p.m. at Bertucci's, 49 Stanhope St., Boston. The restaurant is right next door to the Bi Office and if you finish all your vegetables, Jeanne, BBWN's mailing Diva, will take you over to the office and let you fold and stuff *BiWomen*.

**Newsletter mailing,** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Come lend a hand and be the first on your block to eye the first ever "Swimsuit Edition" of *BiWomen*.

**May 30 ♦ Saturday**

**Out for Laughs** comedy night to benefit Sojourner featuring Diane Amos, Marga Gomez and Bertice Berry. 8 p.m. at Blackman Auditorium of Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Ave., Boston. Tickets (\$18 and \$25) can be purchased at New Words Bookstore or by phone at (617) 524-0415; TTY (617) 373-2184. Wheelchair accessible and ASL interpreted. Call Ellyn at (781) 393-9103 about attending with other BBWN members as a group.

**May 31 ♦ Sunday**

**Biversity Boston Brunch.** 1 p.m. at the Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston, about 1/2 block from Cafe Moka on the other side of the street. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

**Biversity Boston**

is the mixed gender, bi-sexual network of Greater Boston. For more info call the bi office at (617) 424-9595.

**The "Bi Office"**

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.



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# CALENDAR

## Conference Entertainment Lineup:

April 3 ♦ Friday

### Bi Concert

featuring singer/songwriter Tom Robinson, comic Karen Williams, and performance poet Amatul Hannan. 8 p.m. at Lowell Hall, Harvard University, at the corner of Kirkland and Oxford Streets in Cambridge. Tickets are \$12 (\$6 for conference attendees) and available at the conference registration table on Friday and Saturday, (see conference listing for locations) and at the door.

April 4 ♦ Saturday

### amBient temperature

at Harvard University's Dudley House. Come celebrate the bi conference with over 13 hot performers including Carol Queen, Cecelia Tan, Kim Airs, and the Bay Village People. Then dance 'til the early morning hours. Tickets are \$7 in advance (available at Grand Opening! in Brookline), \$8 at the door. From the Harvard Square Red Line T station, follow signs in the station to Church Street/Harvard Yard exit (not the main exit!) and turn left after the turnstiles. At street level, Harvard Yard's Johnson Gate is on the right. Enter Harvard Yard, take an immediate right on a cut stone path and follow it to the end at Dudley House/Lehman Hall. Info: (617) 629-4727, hdoress@hanarchy.com or <http://www.hanarchy.com>.

April 1 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 424-9595.

**The Box.** 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. Kick off the bi conference early at The Box, downstairs at the Cambridge Common restaurant, 1667 Mass. Ave, Cambridge. Info: (617) 547-0759. \$5 cover. Closest T stop is Porter Square on the Red Line.

April 2 ♦ Thursday

**BiNet USA National Meeting.** 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. at Lyman Common in Radcliffe Yard on Appian Way in Harvard Square. This is a great chance to get more actively involved in working for bi rights and visibility. Come help represent the northeast region. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line. Registration at 8:30 a.m. Meeting starts at 9:30 sharp. Info: <http://www.binetusa.org>.

### April 3 - 5 ♦ Friday - Sunday 5th International Bisexual Conference

at Harvard University in Cambridge. Don't miss this extraordinary event! Over 140 workshops, panels, presentations, performances and videos to choose from. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line. Friday registration is 9 a.m. - noon in the Gilman Room of Aggasiz House. Walk down Brattle St. to James St. Aggasiz House is at the corner of Mason and James Sts. Saturday (9 a.m. - 5 p.m.) and Sunday (9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.) registration is in room 204 of Sever Hall in Harvard Yard, near the corner of Quincy and Broadway Sts. Cost is \$72 for Fri - Sun. One day registration is \$36 for Sat.; \$30 each for Fri / Sun. Info: (617) 747-4451, [info@biconf.org](mailto:info@biconf.org) or <http://www.biconf.org>.

April 5 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** Bispac is cancelled for this month.

**A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audreya Lorde.** will be shown at the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender People of Color Film Festival. 7 p.m. at the Black Crow Cafe, 2 Perkins Street, in Jamaica Plain. Free admission. Info: (617) 423-6622 x 226 or [gatchison@vax.clarku.edu](mailto:gatchison@vax.clarku.edu).

April 7 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Women's Rap** discussion group. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807. Theme: "Dating: Coffee, Dinner or Sex"

April 8 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site and other BRC projects. All bi community members and allies are welcome to attend.

April 12 ♦ Sunday

**Black Nations, Queer Nations** will be shown at the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender People of Color Film Festival. 7 p.m. (see April 5)

April 18 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Boston Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. at Thornton's, 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

April 21 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see April 1st)

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9p.m. (see April 7th) Topic: "Socializing in Boston"

## Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network - and help us keep BiWomen alive!

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CALENDAR continues on page 15

## Sports & Hobbies

### From Two-Stepping to the Cha-Cha: Partner Dancing in the GLB Community

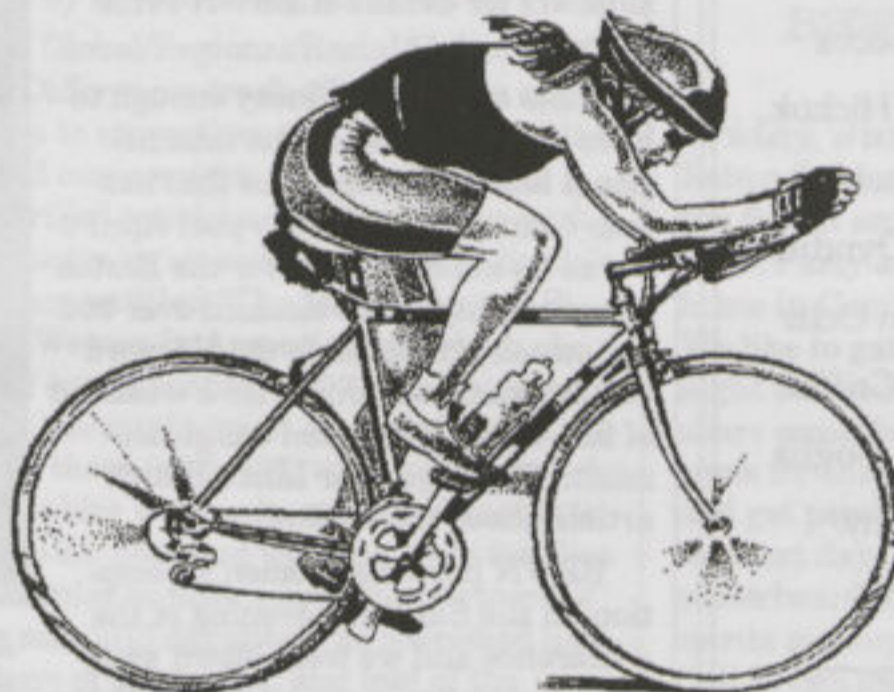
By Gail Zacharias

My main hobby for the past ten years has been social dancing, also known as partner or couple dancing. You know, like fox-trot and cha-cha and all that ballroom stuff that kids used to be forced to learn and learned to hate. From the very beginning, I have done all my dancing in the gay/lesbian/bi community. I started with Sara Brodsky's women's swing dance classes, continued with more swing and the addition of some basic ballroom and the first G/L/B Swingtime dance events. When country western dancing swept through the community, I joined Gays For Patsy and added two-step and even some line dancing to my repertoire. Now I'm starting to explore Latin dancing and am in the process of forming a G/L/B Argentine Tango group.

Partner dancing in the G/L/B community is both the gay-est and the bi-est of all activities. It's the gayest because it's one of the few hobbies where having a same-sex-oriented community is a real necessity. You can join a mainstream group and fully participate in playing volleyball or collecting stamps or playing the trombone. It might not be quite as much fun as doing it in a queer setting, but nothing fundamental prevents you from going as far with it as your interests and talents allow. But the competition rules set by *all* the couple-dancing organizations — swing, ballroom and country western — explicitly define a couple as a man and a woman. You simply cannot enter a sanctioned mainstream ballroom competition with your same sex partner—you will be automatically disqualified.

At the same time, partner dancing in the gay community is incredibly bi-positive. It is *not* just a mirror image of the straight world, with opposite-sex couples replaced by same-sex couples. Enter any Gays For Patsy or Swingtime dance, and you'll see a swirl of women leading women, women leading men, men leading men, and even [gasp!] men leading women. To be replaced, just one song

**Two Stepping** continues on page 8



### "You Are Strong Beautiful Women"

I smiled broadly, cheered and raised my fist high in the air as I rode past a sign with these words on it in Holliston, Massachusetts, about 20 miles out of Boston. Inside I felt strong and proud.

By Linda Blair

Last September I rode my bicycle some 310 miles in three days, which, I imagine, will remain as one of my most physically and psychologically challenging accomplishments for all my life. The Boston —> New York AIDS Ride 3 was, for the most part, a great experience. If you're looking for a way to challenge yourself personally, get or stay strong and fit, and help tangibly and significantly in the fight against AIDS and HIV, you might want to think about doing this year's ride.

But be prepared. Even if you're already in great shape (which I wasn't), you're in for the ride of your life.

For me, the seed was planted last winter. Sick of the harsh New England weather, without paid work and ready for a change, I headed off to Kauai. To get around this beautiful and very hilly Hawaiian island, I spent \$75 on a used mountain

**Strong** continues on page 6

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

International Bi Conference.....	3
Homophobia in Sports.....	4
Collecting Across the Generations.....	5
Survey: Girls in Sports.....	10
WNBA Schedule.....	10
Calendar.....	11-12

## Volunteers of the Month

Jeanne  
Debbie Block-  
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Linda Blair  
Rebecca  
Sarah Hickok  
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Linda Dyndiuk  
Robyn Ochs  
Kate Griffin  
Annie Goglia  
Amy  
Joan



*And many more  
wonderful  
women! You  
know who you  
are! Thank you,  
thank you, thank  
you!*

Thanks again!

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bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this  
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair  
Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on  
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## Still Bi... After All These Years

Boston Pride is coming up June 13th, and we are really excited about celebrating BBWN's 15th anniversary out on the streets. We hope you can come out and join us to make us **EX-TRA** visible this year. See page 3 sidebars for details of BBWN Pride events.

Some of you were lucky enough to have attended the largest international bisexual conference that has ever been convened. This past April 3-5 was an amazing time for the Boston bi community. We welcomed over 900 registered attendees to the Harvard and Radcliffe campuses for a weekend of fun, networking, and enlightenment. See page 3 for Linda Blair's article about the conference.

BBWN hosted a Women's Reception on the Saturday evening of the conference and we were blown away by the response—we estimated that close to 200 women made their way through at some point in the evening. Along with celebrating the conference itself, we also had a cake to acknowledge BBWN's 15th anniversary as an organization.

We'd like to thank the BBWN members who leant their time and energy to making it happen. Thanks go to Ellyn for coordinating the event and to Jeanne, Rosalie, Annie, Linda, Joan, Steph, Amy, and Debbie for being there to set up and clean up. Special thanks to Ellen Cullen for her help with food prep and transporting everything to the site. And a large bi hug and kiss from BBWN to Janice Philpot for the tremendous food she prepared for the reception!

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this newsletter are copyrighted  
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Photo: Ellyn Ruthstrom

*Robyn Ochs, one of BBWN's founding mothers, cuts the cake at the Women's Reception at the 5th International Bisexual Conference in April.*

## Coming in *Bi Women:*



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER  
*Sisterhood*

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER  
*Coming of Age*



### Contributors:

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to the editors:

[lindab@shore.net](mailto:lindab@shore.net)

and [eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu).

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

# 5th International Bisexual Conference a Huge Success!

By Linda Blair

Well folks, we did it! As most of you know, on April 3-5 Boston's bisexual community hosted the largest ever conference on bisexuality at Harvard University in Cambridge. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center, the Harvard Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Graduate Students, BBWN, BiNet USA and several other groups, the 5th International Conference on Bisexuality brought together over 900 people from virtually all corners of the world to learn about and discuss a wide range of issues of interest to bisexuals and their friends and allies. Participants came from as far away as Argentina, Japan, Australia, India, Finland, Mexico, many European countries as well as from all over Canada and the US to attend, actualizing the conference theme of "One Word, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities and the World."

From Friday's opening plenary, emceed enthusiastically by BBWN's own Robyn Ochs, to bi activist and theologian Dr. Elias Farajaje'-Jones' rousing and inspirational speech on Sunday, the atmosphere was charged with excitement, positive energy, and hope that our collective actions can and will lead to a world more tolerant of differences and welcoming of diversity than the one we now live in. All anyone needed to do was look around to realize how far we've already come.

Sharing, appreciating, and embracing our diversity was a theme well represented in the over 140 workshops, panels and presentations throughout the weekend. Here's just a few of the plethora of workshops offered covering 21 different subject tracks:

Sessions in the Organizing and Activism tracks featured bi and allied activist leaders addressing many issues involved with organizing politically for greater acceptance of sexual and gender diversity, both within queer communities and in the mainstream. Topics included what roles can and do straight allies play in queer liberation, how to get the "B" word and bi issues covered in the media, the nuts and bolts of effective lobbying, and how to strengthen alliances between bi and trans movements.

Presentations and workshops within the Gender track explored the components of and connections between gender and sexual orientation, the challenges of being both transgendered and bi in an "either-or world," new ways to describe and think about sexual orientation in a world where gender is becoming

increasingly fluid, a slide presentation on intersexuality, butch and femme identities for bi women, and the increase in young people choosing to define themselves outside of traditional gender categories in a session offered by several young pioneers.

The Global/Regional/Racial/Cultural/Class Differences track offered many opportunities to strengthen ties between bi activists and communities around the world. I was thrilled to take advantage of one such opportunity by attending Alejandra Sarda's workshop entitled "The Many Faces of Bisexual Women in Argentina" in which she singled out Argentina's 40% unemployment rate as the single worst enemy of sexual minorities there (with 40% unemployment who needs to hire a queer?), explained that it is common for poor and working class families in particular to fully accept the partners of queer sons and daughters as welcomed new members of the family, and told of the strong ties between lesbians, gays, bis and trans folk in her country. At Saturday's plenary, Ms. Sarda, a professional psychologist who specializes in coming out issues for LGBT people and abusive relationships between women, was presented with the 1998 Renildo Jose dos Santos Memorial Award, named after a murdered Brazilian bisexual activist, for her organizing in Argentina's bisexual community.

Not surprisingly, among the best attended of the workshops centered around sex and sexuality. The Safer Sex Sluts, a "hands-on" San Francisco based safer sex education group, performed before a packed house, explicitly showing and telling the hows and whys of using latex and lube to play safe and hot. In their workshop "Ordeal in the Underworld: S/M and Spirituality," well known sexperts Carol Queen and Robert Lawrence spoke to an overflow audience about the use of S/M power exchange to reach physical and psychological altered states. Then in "Polyamorous Paths: Loving More Than One" a panel of polyamorous people discussed with a standing room only crowd how consensual non-monogamous relationships fit in their lives.

In addition to great workshops, the conference offered three tremendous keynote addresses. Friday's keynote speaker, openly bi Connecticut State representative Evelyn Mantilla, chronicled her own fascinating

**Conference** continues on page 9



**Boston Pride is  
June 13!  
Celebrate with  
BBWN!**

## **Friday, June 12:**

Robyn Ochs will host the fourth annual Pre-Pride Party at her home in Cambridge. We like to gather the night before Pride to share some food, make signs for the parade, and get psyched for the next day. Food, posterboard and high spirits are supplied. Call Robyn for directions, 576-1066.



## **Saturday, June 13:**

On the morning of Pride, BBWN will host the Bi Brunch at the Community Church at 565 Boylston Street, at the Copley Place T stop. It's a great place to have breakfast, meet up with friends, and feel a part of the beautiful Boston bi community. (See calendar for details.)

**Call for Writers:  
Lesbian & Bi  
Sorority Women**

The Lambda 10 Project is seeking contributions for their second anthology, specifically focused on being lesbian or bisexual in a college sorority. Former or current members of a college sorority (closeted or out) are encouraged to share their personal accounts (positive or negative) of sisterhood in relationship to being lesbian or bisexual. The Lambda 10 Project also encourages straight women to submit stories about having a sister "come out" and how that experience impacted the sorority. These stories, along with homophobia intervention techniques tailored toward sorority women, will then be published in a book as an educational resource to the Greek community and student affairs professionals. Send submissions to: Lambda 10 Project; Office of Student Ethics/Anti-Harassment Programs; 705 E. 7th St.; Bloomington, IN 47405-3809 or email them to [lambda10@indiana.edu](mailto:lambda10@indiana.edu). Deadline: October 10, 1998.

## Homophobia in Sports: A Positive Report Card from Simmons' Swim Team

By Shanti Heffern



I sat in the grass today with five of my friends, flipping through the latest issue of *Sojourner*. It was convenient that this month's issue had to do with women in sports, because Meryl, Chrissie, Sara, Laura, Valerie, and myself

comprise a small portion of the swim team at Simmons College. The first article I read was a review by Minnie Chiu of Pat Griffin's *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia In Sports*. Not surprisingly, lesbians and bisexual women are still oppressed by homophobia in the realm of sports. Griffin attributes this to gender stereotypes women have historically been subjected to. Griffin points out that when women first began to participate in the area of sports, critics rejected the idea, saying that women's involvement was "unfeminine," "unnatural," and a threat to their "natural delicacy." It was said, too, that femininity was being replaced by "unnatural assertiveness and increasing masculinization." Here began the stereotypes that still exist today about female athletes. Such stereotypes have threatened female sexuality, and put heterosexual women on the defensive. The article went on to talk about ways in which lesbians are discriminated against, reasons why, and ways in which lesbians have had to deal with this type of prejudice. I looked around at my friends as I finished the article and smiled as I realized how grateful I was.

Sports have been a big part of my life since I was a kid. My parents started me on yoga when I was four. Yoga later led to ballet, which led to tap, which led to jazz, which led to gymnastics, which led to taikwondo, which led to soccer, which led to track, which led to cross country, which led back to soccer, and now, seventeen years later, I swim for my college team. Reading Chiu's article made me grateful because it helped me see how fortunate I've been.

I came out four years ago when I was a senior in high school. My girlfriend and I played soccer for our high school team together. Nobody on the team knew that we were dating. When they looked at us they saw two best friends, and we let

them, as well as everyone else in school, believe that. Our decision to do this did not come from fear that our relationship wouldn't be accepted. We went to a really liberal high school in Washington, DC. Lots of kids were out, and nobody thought twice about it. I think we came to this decision simply because we didn't want anyone else involved in our relationship.

I played soccer for one season my first year in college. To put it lightly, I had less than a warm welcome. At times I thought that their behavior was because of my sexual orientation, but I was never really sure. I decided not to play soccer again this year, which resulted in depression. I came to realize that it was because it was the first year in eight that I wasn't involved in some type of sport. Although it was late in the season, I went to the swim coach and asked if there was any room left on the team. With a smile he told me there was, and a few days later I went to my first day of practice. The team welcomed me with open arms, and very quickly I felt comfortable enough to talk about my girlfriend around them. I did this without thinking twice about it. It never really dawned on me that this decision could have been a dangerous one. I was lucky.

As I read through *Sojourner*, I asked my friends, for the first time, how they felt when I came out to them. At first, the general response was "I don't know, I didn't really think about it." However, as the conversation moved on they began to open up. Laura, one of the captains of the team, pointed out that "swimming is different [from other sports] because we all change, shower, and swim together." Under such conditions it could be easy for some women to feel vulnerable or afraid of someone who is gay. She went on to say that "you were open, and people on the team never expressed any awkwardness around you, and I think that is unusual...The other day I was talking to someone about how neat it was that you were open about your sexuality, and no one expressed any concerns about it."

Sara, with her usual right-to-the-point approach, said "To be honest, a year ago I may have been uncomfortable with it, but once I encountered it, it didn't seem any different to me. I feel like I've become more open-minded...What really matters is respect. Respect of beliefs, values, ethnicity... As long as respect exists there shouldn't be a problem." Looking around she said, "We are lucky because we have a team that is open-minded...We talk a lot about your girlfriend, just like we talk a lot about our boy-friends." Expanding on Sara's point, Chrissie attributed the open-mindedness of the women on our team to the fact that "Simmons is a woman's

**Homophobia continues on page 10**

# Collecting Across the Generations

By Ellyn Ruthstrom



This is a very big secret. No one would ever suspect that I collect what I do. Whenever someone uncovers my secret I see their eyes widen, I hear the gasp of disbelief and the look of concern on the person's face. There is an image of an eccentric old man holding up a magnifying glass to check the quality of his specimens and I don't appear to fit that. It's difficult for me to tell you this, but I am a philatelist. In other words, I collect stamps.

I blame my grandmother. As anyone who deals in stamps will tell you, philately is a heavily male-dominated hobby; though this I did not know for many years because the only person I knew who collected stamps was my grandmother. Grammy had two children — my mother and my uncle — and she started a world collection for each of them, maintaining their books when they moved to different places or couldn't take the time to update them due to raising small children. And then the grandchildren were recruited to become nacent collectors, each choosing a specialty of animals, or flowers, or Queen Elizabeth heads, or forms of transportation (the only grandson).

My personal collection was one of animals from all over the world. I had a dark brown three-ring binder with specially decorated animal pages. If we went for a sleepover to Grammy and Papa's I would pack my stampbook because I always knew Grammy would want to work on it at some point during our visit. Grammy would save envelopes full of stamps for each of the grandchildren and we would spread out over the dining room table and put them in our special books.

Sometimes Grammy would make it a game for us to help her with her massive world collection. World collections have printed black and white pictures of all the stamps that countries produce each year. Most stamps have the year of issue printed on them so you look in that year's section and match the stamp to the correct picture. As children, we loved matching games, and Grammy had such patience with us — until we would get bored and wander away to find something else to do.

Grammy and Papa loved to travel, and often while putting stamps into a certain country Gram would share some of her tourist tales with me. We would admire the stunning art masterpieces that France would commemorate or laugh at the fact that small Polynesian islands had elaborate stamp sets honoring Disney characters or Elvis.

But the knowledge I gained is not why I enjoyed it so much; it was quality time with Grammy and the passion she had for her hobby was infectious when I was with her.

I know a lot of people who cannot ever imagine coming out to their grandparents (let alone other members of their family), but my love for my grandmother is such and my own sense of being whole with people I care about made it a given that I would have to come out to her. My father had asked me at one point not to tell my grandparents while I was living far away; he felt that he would have to deal with all the family discussions about me while I wasn't around and he didn't want to do that. But once I moved back to the area I took it into my own hands.

I went to visit my grandparents for the day. We had lunch out at their favorite local diner and then we went back to their place for Papa to fall asleep watching tennis and Grammy and me to "do stamps."

I we were in the sorting small and told her to tell her important be- meant so I also said that



doubt if she had suspicions before this because she had known that I had moved to Ohio with my "roommate" (girlfriend) from Northampton, Massachusetts (aka Lesbianville, USA). I told her that I was bisexual and happy being so and wanted her to know that my next partner could be either a man or woman.

With her classic Yankee frankness, Grammy replied, "To each their own poison." We both laughed. She told me that she had not had suspicions at all, but also wanted to know if that was why my marriage had ended several years earlier. We talked a little bit more about it and she assured me that she just wanted me to be happy, and that was it. Back to licking hinges and finding the right spot for very small pieces of serrated paper.

Later, when I started a serious relationship with my girlfriend Janice, I called Grammy and told her I was bringing someone very special to see her over the Thanksgiving weekend. She didn't give me any grand assurances of hospitality, but when she met Janice and they hit it off I felt a special relief.

I am the only grandchild who still maintains a stamp collection. When I lived overseas and was not settled in one place for long, Grammy played caretaker to it. In that time, she started

Collecting continues on page 8

## Call for Submissions:

Girls and women of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to submit their true stories for a book-to-be entitled: *That Takes Ovaries! Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts*. Seeking submissions (double spaced: one paragraph to four pages — 1000 words max) of anything you have ever done — little or big — that was gutsy, courageous, bold, audacious or inspirational. It can be playful, serious, spontaneous, calculated, smart, sexy and/or an example of leadership. It could be an act that defies sexism and gender stereotyping. The book will be a collection of short first-person narratives. Include a one sentence description of yourself. If you wish, you could also include any, all or none of the following: your name, age, background (culture, ethnicity, orientation etc.), location, profession, hobbies, most hated/loved things, especially things that relate to your story. **Two Deadlines:** Preliminary July 1, and Last Call September 15, 1998. Send stories (preferably via email) with word count, return address, phone & email to: Rebecca Edelson, 12 Fern Street, Lexington, MA 02173; email: redelson@gis.net

## Gay Games: Friendship Through Culture and Sports

One of the biggest international sport and culture events is being held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands on August 1-8, 1998. An estimated 15,000 participants and over 200,000 visitors are expected from all over the world for Gay Games 1998. There will be the usual athletic competition, along with cultural events, special women's programs, and general festivities. At the official Gay Games Information Center visitors at Amsterdam City Hall can receive information about the events in the sports, cultural, and festivities program, as well as buy tickets for all ticketed events. Tickets for the events are available at the Gay Games Ticketcenter, tel: +31 (0)20 4200200; fax +31 (0)20 6229011. For more information on Gay Games 1998 please contact: Paul van Yperen, Media Officer Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, tel: +31 20 6201998, fax: +31 20 4281324 or check out the fabulous Gay Games website at <http://www.gaygames.nl>.

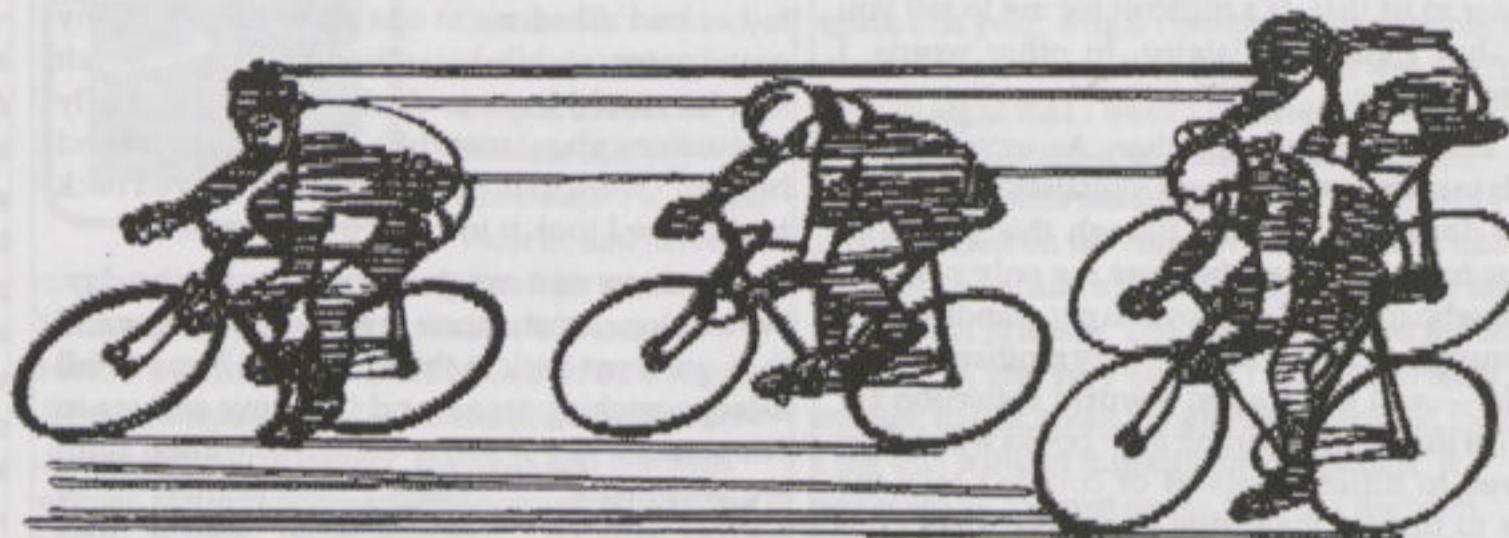
## Strong from page 1

bike and quickly realized that even 21 gears doesn't seem like enough when the road ahead rises so high and steeply that you can hardly see where it levels off. Mostly though, I just took my time and kept pumping and eventually would make it to the top, an approach that some eight months later would really pay off for me on the AIDS ride.

After about three months, I returned to Boston and brought my bike back with me. In previous years I had thought about doing the AIDS ride but dismissed the idea as ridiculously

on Kauaii, the first time I rode up the hill on my street, I had to pause for breath, but soon I started riding up it three, six, nine, then twelve times a day. Or for variety, I'd ride both of the hills in the Arnold Arboretum three to six times each. And later, when I got really serious, I became well acquainted with Summit Avenue near Coolidge Corner in Brookline.

I bought a new, more comfortable "gel" seat and discovered the wonder of toe clips and biking cleats, shirts that wick not stick, shorts padded in the crotch *and* the butt, and more. Of the



overambitious. But, moved to tears by the literature I'd requested from the Ride office, and then again by the video at the orientation I'd attended, I decided to sign up. After all, I rationalized, the Ride was nearly six months away and I could always change my mind.

This ambivalence stuck with me right up to the night before the ride. It seemed like *such* a huge undertaking. I just couldn't imagine how I could actually do this. Of course, I was briefed repeatedly on the logistics: all my gear would be transported in a truck to the camping sites, I would be assigned a tent and tent mate, all food, gatorade, water and most everything else would be provided along the way. It sounded simple enough, but I was skeptical. What if I got hurt? What if my bike broke down? What if I got hit by a car?

Fear, rational and otherwise, is something most of us live with and I definitely have my share. Yes, I was training; yes, I spent about two hours nearly every day riding up big hills on my bike; yes, I was (slowly) learning that I *could* change a flat tire and that if I kept at it my muscles *did* get stronger and my heart and lungs more conditioned. *But* riding 300 miles in three days would not, could not, be possible for *me*. For other people, even for people who had trained less, sure. But not for me, right? Disaster was bound to strike. Something major was bound to go wrong and sabotage my efforts. Keeping these and other fears relatively contained, I started training. Even after my riding

significant capital outlay I made for these and other newfound treasures, the ones I consider essential for anyone attempting this year's ride would be a hydrapak ("hydrate or die!") so you can have constant, hands-free access to long gulps of water or powerade, a mirror (to me an absolute necessity when riding in a big group) *and* a headlight.

I recommend that no matter who tells you not to, bring a headlight with you on your bike if you do the Ride! My biggest, and pretty much my only major complaint about the Boston —> New York AIDS Ride 3 was that we left too late on Day One and, I believe, in doing so endangered many riders. Although we were told to gather at 5 am, the "ride out" was not scheduled to begin until 8 am and it took over an hour for all of us to leave. As circumstance would have it, I was both a relatively slow rider and one of the very last out of the parking lot, at around 9 am. (How far back you are in the ride out is, seemingly, out of your hands.) One positive aspect of this was that I did actually get to pass lots of other riders in my quest to maintain a pace that would allow me to finish the day without getting "sagged," the term for having you and your bike loaded onto a truck and driven to that day's destination. (I was certain I would be so slow I would never pass anyone.) But the downside, and this is a biggie, was that although I kept up what for me was a good pace, *I could not finish the first day's ride during daylight.*

I and (presumably) all other riders had been assured that we would not have, or even be allowed, to ride in the dark. But the reality was that myself and, word that night had it, many hundreds of others rode for miles and miles over country roads that didn't have a single streetlight and were often lined on both sides with tall, overhanging trees that blocked most of the moonlight.

Almost everyone had advised me to lighten my load as much as possible and take nothing that wasn't absolutely essential. So, foolishly, I'd left both my headlights in my gear bag. Boy, how I wished I'd have retained that one precious pound of cargo instead.

Aside from this one major reservation, the experience was tremendously positive. Training for the Ride taught me that, although I've never been a great athlete and climbing several flights of stairs still makes me breathe hard, my body will respond to conditioning if I put in the time and effort. I knew I would never be among the fastest. In fact, on Day Three I arrived in Manhattan heading down 8th Avenue just in time to encounter the "Victory Ride" of well over a thousand riders who had already finished heading up the other side of the street to the closing ceremony. But I worked hard and plodded along at a steady pace and rode up every long, steep hill. All this helped me to believe more strongly in myself, my abilities, and my general philosophy that persistence and determination will carry me through many difficult times.

For me, much of the Boston —> New York AIDS Ride experience was about trusting, relying on and believing in myself, but a great deal of it was also about cooperation, teamwork, courtesy and tolerance. Bicycling with literally thousands of other riders takes a great deal of coordination and communication. Many pairs of eyes and voices are necessary to watch for and tell each other about traffic, potholes, and other potential hazards. After training for five months almost entirely on my own, I was amazed and moved at the level of and need for cooperation during my first group training ride. Navigating busy urban streets as a unit felt both complicated and satisfying. This balance between self-reliance and mutual support remained a constant throughout the Ride. Clearly, no one could pedal for me, but throughout the experience I felt very well taken care of, appreciated and, at times, truly loved. From the tech crew who repeatedly fixed the mechanical shortcomings of my poor, aging mountain bike (she had a tougher time on the Ride than I did); to the food crew who cheerfully offered "the blue stuff" (Powerade) and food to thirsty, tired riders all day long; to the rider who helped me troubleshoot what to do when my chain repeatedly fell off going up one of the steepest hills in all of Connecticut; to the thousands of people

who gathered in cities and towns along the route to cheer us on, slap high-fives, hold up inspirational signs or hand us candy bars and utter "thank you for riding" hundreds and hundreds of times over. The high point of the ride for me came in Bridgeport, CT, where the tremendously warm welcome we received brought many strong and bittersweet emotions bubbling to the surface and tears streaming down my face as I rode.

It wasn't only the actions of strangers, but also the way so many people close to me were willing to help, that moved me. Even though I am a professional fundraiser, I held off on raising any money until about one month before the Ride. I didn't want to accept any money for it until I felt sure I could do it, or at least was willing to try. Once I accepted money, I felt there was no backing out. But once I started, many family members and friends were there and willing to help, certainly in part for the cause, but mostly for me. Although asking people you know for money is to me much harder than asking strangers for it, having to do it helped to affirm for me that I have lots of people in my life who care about me and want to support me.

I know my experience of the Boston —> New York AIDS Ride 3 was valuable not just to me but to the many others who benefit from the Fenway Community Health Center's patient care services and extensive work in HIV prevention and AIDS research. So if you're interested in testing your physical limits, confronting your personal fears and becoming part of a group of over 3,000 strong, beautiful people for three long, challenging days, you might consider signing up for the Boston —> New York AIDS Ride 4.



The Boston —> New York AIDS Ride 4 will take place on September 17 - 19, 1998. For more information about this year's ride call (617) 859-8282, send email to [info@boaidside.org](mailto:info@boaidside.org) or visit the AIDS Ride web site at [www.aidsride.org](http://www.aidsride.org).

### Looking for Pro-Choice Activists

Janet Zinn, a doctoral student at Syracuse University, would like to talk to pro-choice activists and abortion providers about their current sense of anti-abortion violence as part of her dissertation field work on anti-abortion violence. In particular, she is interested in talking with activists and providers in the Boston area who are knowledgeable about pro-choice community networks and/or are willing to talk with her about any experiences directly or peripherally dealing with clinic violence. She can be reached by email at [jhzinn@mailbox.syr.edu](mailto:jhzinn@mailbox.syr.edu).

### Help with Survey on Bisexual's Mental Health Treatment Experiences:

<http://www.seventalent.com/bitherapy>

For email & paper versions:

Contact: Emily Page at: 781-888-847-4458

[bitherapy@aaaa.net](mailto:bitherapy@aaaa.net)

315 Broadway, Ste. 115, Arlington, Ma, 02174

Thru mid June, '98

**Thanks.**

## Check Out The Improved On-line Bisexual Bookstore!!

The bookstore now lists over 700 items of special interest to bisexual people. New sections have been added for books on tape, CDs by bisexual artists, plays and screenplays with bisexual characters and bi-inclusive humor. But wait, there's more! Now you can now order *any* book, tape, video, or CD in the entire Amazon.com catalog through the Bisexual Bookstore. Amazon.com will make a donation to the Bisexual Resource Center for *each* item ordered (except special orders and gift certificates). The bookstore has a new URL: <http://www.biresource.org/bookstore> (Webmasters, please update your links.) Support the good work of the Bisexual Resource Center and buy it through the Bisexual Bookstore!

## Two-Stepping from page 1

later, by another swirl with all roles and partnerships up for grabs again. Some people always lead, some always follow. Some can do both but prefer one or the other. Some like both equally, some like either depending on the song or the person they are dancing with. Just as with real life, once you jettison rigid gender-based roles, a whole range of possibilities opens up, along with the freedom to take your place anywhere in the range and stay there for as long or as short a time as you wish.

In general, you can find out about any upcoming Boston-area country/western dance events by calling the Gays For Patsy Danceline (781) 446-3115. The message is updated every week. To find out about upcoming swing/ballroom Swingtime events, call (617) 739-9330.

If taking lessons is more your speed, there are three local area teachers who offer regular dance lessons to the G/L/B community. The schedules and specific dances covered change, so call the teachers to find out what's coming up and get the details.

teaches classes on Wednesday nights in the South End.

teaches on Tuesday nights at the Ramrod and

Thursday nights in the South End. And our own Liz Nania (617-254-1754) teaches classes on Sundays in Brookline.

See you on the dance floor! ▽

## Collecting from page 5

scaling down her own collection and bequeathed quite a lot of stamps to me. I know that when she passes on I will get certain parts of her collection and they will be very special to me. I do not know if I will continue to be a collector of stamps when she is gone. I don't often "do stamps" by myself; I still rely on Grammy's enthusiasm for the process. By collecting alongside of her, I have also learned to admire the patience, attention to detail, and desire for order that she demonstrated to me through her collection. And our shared time has helped create a continuity across a generational divide made more obvious with the loss of my mother. ▽

**Happy 15th Anniversary BBWN!!!**  
**Still Bi...After All These Years!!**

## G/L/B Dance Resources

If you are interested in giving partner dancing a try, here are some upcoming events:

On **Friday nights** until June 12, Gays for Patsy sponsors Lambda Ranch, a smoke, alcohol-free country western dance at the First Church Unitarian of JP. \$5 donation, but first-time dancers get in free.

**June 12** is the Pride kick-off dance and season finale. There are free beginner lessons from 7-8pm, followed by dancing until 11pm.

**Tuesday nights** are country nights at the Ramrod, 1254 Boylston St. There is no cover charge. Free beginner lesson with [redacted] starts at 8pm, followed by dancing from 9-11:30pm.

**Saturday night** is country dancing at the Arlington Street Church. Smoke and alcohol-free, with \$5 cover and lessons from 7:15-8:15pm and dancing until 11pm. This one is mostly men, although women are welcome and there are usually a few at each dance.

**Saturday, June 13:** Gays For Patsy Stampede '98, a smoke and alcohol-free Pride dance at Veronique's in Brookline, 7-11pm.

**Saturday, June 20:** Swingtime Post-Pride Extravaganza, at Knights of Columbus Hall at 323 Washington St in Brighton.



## Conference from page 3

story of growing alienated with a corporate environment unwilling to accept sexual orientation as a form of "diversity" worthy of educating its employees about, running for political office as a Latina woman and coming out publicly as bisexual in a speech during last year's Connecticut Pride.

On Saturday, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Executive Director Kerry Lobel, who has been a strong and effective voice for greater bi and trans inclusion in NGLTF and the wider gay and lesbian movement, spoke powerfully for the need to overcome internal barriers between gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans activists in order to most effectively fight for justice, equality, and social change. Speaking of social and legislative attacks by the radical right against queers across the US, Lobel said "We are winning the long-term struggle, but in the short-term the right will give us a run for our money, because they have to in order to survive."

Then on Sunday, Elias Farajaje'-Jones, an afrikan native-american two-spirited/queer identified bisexual man and a professor of the history and sociology of religion at the Howard University Divinity School, inspired us to embrace diversity in all its forms by acknowledging and appreciating our differences, while cautioning us strongly against any attempts to gain societal acceptance by conforming to mainstream values that don't.

In addition to the myriad daytime activities, conference attendees were treated to two nights



Kerry Lobel, Executive Director of NGLTF, and BBWN member Robyn Ochs at the 5th International Conference on Bisexuality.

of great entertainment with local poet and performance artist Amatul Hannan, comic Rob Yeager and world famous English rocker Tom Robinson performing on Friday night and "AmBIent Temperature," an outrageous queer cabaret on Saturday night.

Overall, the 5th International Conference on Bisexuality was an incredibly uplifting, informative, and fun experience. Thanks to all of you who helped organize, present, or attend. Your participation really helped to make the conference a success!

The next International Conference on Bisexuality will take place in 2000 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Then in 2002, the conference will be in Sydney, Australia to coincide with the Gay Games. If this year's conference is any indication of those to come, we can guarantee that you won't want to miss them.

## Women of Color Writers

Submissions are being sought for an anthology that will explore the importance of creativity in the lives of women of color writers. Areas to be explored include: creativity as healing, as an expression of identity, as a vehicle for building community, as an act of rebellion, and barriers to creativity. All contributors must identify as women of color and creative writers (of any genre). Essays (no poetry or fiction) must be double-spaced, 2,500 words or less, in 12 point font, and must include the author's name, address, phone number and email address on the cover sheet. Please send two copies, a one paragraph biography, and a letter-size SASE for confirmation of receipt and update. *Deadline:* June 15, 1998. Send to: Calderon, re: anthology, 1356 East 28th St, Oakland, CA 94606; paraluna@aol.com.

## BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

### Psychotherapy and Consultation

50 Dudley Street  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
(617) 497-6581

## JEAN CHAPIN SMITH, LICSW, BCD

*psychotherapy and consultation*

individuals, couples, families  
groups/workshops

54 Sacramento Street, Cambridge MA 02138 (617) 876-2113  
New Wings Psychotherapy (617) 643-8780



## Alternatives to Marriage Project Forming

If you see yourself as part of a "long-term" couple that is unlikely ever to marry, Marshall Miller and Dorian Solot, founders of the newly formed Alternatives to Marriage Project, would like to interview you for a book about and for unmarried couples.

Everyone, including all people in same and differently gendered couples, should have the right to marry. But we also need an expanded definition of relationships and families that is inclusive of those who decide, for whatever reason, that marriage is not or would not be right for them. The Alternatives to Marriage Project seeks to provide resources, advocacy, and support to people who are not married and who do or may face discrimination based on their marital status.

The Alternatives to Marriage Project is open to everyone, including singles, couples, people in relationships containing more than two people, and people of all genders and sexual orientations.

The group maintains a low-volume email announcement list and a paper mail list for those without access to email. If you are interested in being interviewed, to get on either mailing list or for more information, you can contact the group at [atmp@netspace.org](mailto:atmp@netspace.org) or 781-793-9911.

## Survey: Girls in Sports Less Likely to Get Pregnant


A study by the Women's Sports Foundation has found that girls who play high school sports delay becoming sexually active and are less likely to get pregnant than those who don't. The study is based on an analysis of data gathered by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in surveying 11,000 high school students.

The study found that girls who played sports are less than half as likely to get pregnant as girls who didn't, are more likely to begin sex later in adolescence, are more likely to have fewer partners, and are more likely to use contraceptives.

Paula Hunt, spokeswoman for the New York-based foundation said, "When girls participate in sports, it helps their self-esteem," Hunt said. "They learn how to set goals, to have discipline and to play on a team...They learn resiliency because you are bound to lose."


The foundation's findings were based on the CDC's national study of youth risk behavior



among students in grades 9 through 12. The foundation's report also relied on a study of 699 families from western New York by the New York State Research Institute on Addiction. While the study focused mainly on girls, it found no consistent differences in sexual behavior between male athletes and non-athletes. The private, nonprofit Women's Sports Foundation promotes the participation of women and girls in sports and lobbies for women's sports issues. 

## Homophobia from page 4

college, and people are more open-minded, liberal."

More often than not, the stories I hear of women coming out to their friends, families, co-workers, or teammates ends with rejection... or worse. The world is filled with homophobia which is perpetuated by small minds. It is for these reasons that I take pride in telling a success story such as this one. There is an element of sisterhood, respect, unity, loyalty, friendship, and pride on my team. Such camaraderie works to transcend prejudice. Our team is made of women with different backgrounds and lifestyles. Each one of our differences are honored, and celebrated as part of what makes each one of us unique and individual. Unfortunately, this kind of respect is unusual, making me feel loyalty toward the women on my team not only as teammates, but also as friends. 

## 1998 WNBA Schedule on ESPN

All Times are EasternST and are subject to change.



Monday, June 15	Houston at Charlotte	7:30
Monday, June 22	Utah at Cleveland	7:30
Monday, June 29	Phoenix at New York	7:30
Wednesday, July 8	Houston at New York	7:30
Monday, July 13	Los Angeles at Phoenix	8:30
Monday, July 20	Sacramento at Phoenix	8:30
Monday, July 27	Los Angeles at Cleveland	8:00
Monday August 3	Washington at Los Angeles	9:00
Monday, August 10	Charlotte at Houston	8:00
Monday, August 17	Cleveland at New York	8:00
Friday, August 28	WNBA Semifinal Game 1	7:30

## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

sisterhood with other women due to race, class or sexuality? Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news and views to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail text only (not images) to [both\\_lindab@shore.net](mailto:both_lindab@shore.net) and [eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu).

### July 4 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Outing to the Fireworks.** Show up anytime after 3pm. Fireworks usually start around 9pm. Take the T to the Boston side of the esplanade, cross over the lagoon or follow the path closest to the river, upriver past the shell, past the lagoon, where the trees start to thin. We'll have a pole with an identifiable bi banner (the pink and blue bi triangles, the BRC banner or something you can't miss). We'll be roughly opposite the barge in the river, and will have the best view in the city. Bring blankets to sit on, food, non-alcoholic drinks, reading material, cards or games, and sunscreen.

### July 5 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. The first hour's topic is "Dating strategies." (see June 7th)

### July 7 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9p.m. (see June 2nd)

### July 8 ♦ Wednesday

**BBWN Introductory Meeting.** A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 p.m.- 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

### July 8 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at the bi office. All bi community members and allies are welcome to attend.

### July 10 - 12 ♦ Friday - Saturday

**BBWN Weekend on the Cape.**

Join us for a weekend of fun in the sun. We've reserved two cabins all our own at the Eastham AYH hostel for Fri. and Sat. nights. We'll be right off the bike path, just a short walk to the beach and just a ways down Rte 6 from Provincetown. Maximum of 12 participants. Registration deadline is July 1. Total cost is \$28 plus food. To sign up and for more info call Liz at (617) 876-0064. Open to all women.



### July 12 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Canoeing Outing.** Meet at the Bi Office at 10 am to car-pool. Or if you prefer, meet the group at 11 am at the Concord Canoe/South Bridge Boathouse, 496 Main St (Route 62), Concord. Take Route 2 to Route 62 East (2 lights west of the Walden exit). The Boathouse will be on your left, parking opposite on right. Bring lunch. Rates are \$8.95/hr. Info: contact Arthur at (617)527-1442 or [arthurc@mediaone.net](mailto:arthurc@mediaone.net).

### July 18 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch** 11:30am. at Doyle's at 3484

Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Nearest T stop is Forest Hills on the Orange Line.

### July 19 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch** at Robyn's in Central Square, Cambridge. Come enjoy a leisure Sunday morning with good food and wonderful company. Call Robyn for directions at (617) 576-1066.

**Biversity Outing to Singing Beach.** Meet at noon sharp on the commuter rail platform at North Station to catch the 12:15 Rockport line train to Manchester-by-the-Sea. \$3.50 each way.

### July 21 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see June 3rd)

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. (see June 2nd)

### July 23 - 27 ♦ Thursday - Monday

**Bi Camp.** A fun weekend of camping with other bi and bi-friendly people in a new location near Northampton, MA. Campers must provide tent, food, and transportation. \$5-\$10 per night sliding scale. For registration forms or info leave a message for Biversity Boston at (617) 424-9595 or see their web site at [www.biresource.org/biversity/](http://www.biresource.org/biversity/).

### July 26 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1 p.m. Enjoy Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai and more at Ma Soba. Corner of Dunster and Mt. Auburn Streets in Harvard Square, Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

### July 28 ♦ Tuesday

**BBWN Dinner.** 6 p.m. Join the newsletter mailing crew at Bertucci's, 49 Stanhope St., Boston. After dinner, we'll head next door to the Bi Office for the BiWomen mailing.

**BiWomen mailing,** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Come hang with other cool women and lend a hand to get out the newsletter.



*Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual network of Greater Boston. For more info on Biversity or to join call the Bi Office at (617) 424-9595.*

### BiWomen Subscription Form

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New Subscriber      \_\_\_\_ Renewal

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\_\_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)

\_\_\_\_ \$30-\$100

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

BBWN

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**BiWomen,  
c/o BBWN  
P.O. Box 639  
Cambridge, MA  
02140**

**Such a deal!**

## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe', right next door to Bertucci's and less than one block from the Back Bay T station on the Orange Line. For info call (617) 424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call (617) 354-8807.

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk.** 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### 2nd Thursdays:

**Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group.** 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: (617) 499-9612

**Bi Married Women's Support Group.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at (617) 731-9060 for info.

### 3rd Thursdays:

**Speakout (formerly the GLBisexual Speakers Bureau) Meeting.** 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the Bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m. with the theme program starting at 8 p.m. Info: (617) 354-0133.

# CALENDAR

## June 2 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807. Topic: "What does bi mean to you?"

## June 3 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office, 29 Stanhope St., Boston. A small donation is requested (but not required) to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 424-9595.

## June 6 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Xenathon** at Morgan's in Somerville from 2-8pm. Come watch episodes from the recent season of Xena, Warrior Princess. Email amazani@aol.com or call (617) 625-5966 for directions.

**Biversity Dress to Express party.** 8 pm at Morgan's. Come dressed to express your identity, beliefs, fetishes, relationship status, or other interests. Contact info above.

## June 7 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. The first hour's topic: "Bisexuality and Spirituality." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

## June 10 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. All bi and bi-friendly people are welcome.

## June 12 ♦ Friday

**BBWN Pre-Pride Party** at Robyn's. 7 pm. Join all your friends from BBWN to make signs and get psyched up for the Pride Parade. Food and arts materials provided. Directions: (617) 576-1066. All women welcome.

**1998 Boston Dyke March.** 7 p.m. starting in Copley Square and ending on the common. Be sure to join us at Robyn's after (see above).

## June 13 ♦ Saturday

**1998 Annual Bi Pride Brunch.** 9-11:30am. Come celebrate the bi-est holiday of the year with the whole community! BBWN is hosting this year's brunch at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. \$5-10 sliding scale. Nearest T stop is Copley on the Green Line. Wheelchair accessible.

**Boston Pride March.** Show your bisexual pride by marching with us in the 27th annual Pride March. Meet at the Pride Brunch (see above) or ask where the "29 Stanhope Street group" is lining up. We'll be part of that group.

## June 14 ♦ Sunday

**Queer Cabaret,** 5-8pm at Jacques, 79 Broadway St., Boston. Hosted by the Bromfield Street Education Foundation, a strong ally of the bi community. A chance to network with progressive queer activists and featuring Letta Neely, Sistah's of the Yam and other local queer artists.

## June 16 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see June 3rd)

**Bi Women's Rap Group.** 7:30-9p.m. (see June 2nd) Topic: "In and out of the closet."

## June 19 ♦ Friday

**Biversity Potluck** at Artur's in Newton. Bring a scrumptious potluck dish and your charming self. Info and directions: (617) 527 1442 or arthurc@mediaone.net.

## June 20 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq, Somerville. Across from the Davis Sq. Red Line station.

## June 24 ♦ Wednesday

**Biversity Trip to the MFA.** 6 pm. Come check out the treasures of Boston's own Museum of Fine Arts. Meet outside on the steps or just inside if it's raining. Nearest T stop is Museum on the Green E line. MFA admission is free on Wednesday nights.

## June 27 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Walk in the Arnold Arboretum** in Jamaica Plain. Come celebrate summer with friends. Meet at 1 pm in front of the Visitor's Center near the main entrance off the Arborway.

## Saturday Night Fever! A Dance

For Single Women at the Days Inn, 1234 Soldiers Field Rd. 8pm - 2am. \$10 cover, cash bar. House, Techno, 80's, Disco, Big Band, and Motown with DJ Dee. Info and directions: 254-0550. This is a smoke-free event.

## June 28 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1pm at Mucho Gusto. Cuban food and a bi-friendly atmosphere. 1174 Boylston Street (near Mass. Ave).

## July 1 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9pm (see June 3rd)

## July 3 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline.** This issue's topic is Sisterhood. Are you a sister? Are you close to her or not in contact at all? What does that relationship mean to you? As a feminist, how do you see sisterhood between women? Do you feel a



**CALENDAR** continues on page 11

## Sisterhood

### *How My Big Sister Became My Friend*

By Annie G.

Last year my sister and I were visiting our parents in the midwest. We were both far from our homes in bay areas on the opposite coasts of the U.S. My sister, Diana, lives on the west coast and I live in the Massachusetts Bay Area. My parents had one guest room with two beds, so we slept in the same bedroom for the first time in many years. Neither of us could sleep so we started talking. Although my sister and I have been fairly close for a long time, there were things we kept back. Some of it was the physical distance that separated us, and some was my sister's way. She was the type of person who was always "fine," and usually had to be drawn out to get more specific personal details. But that night we talked more openly than we ever had about our dreams, our relationships, and our sex lives. As I suspected, we share a strong and adventurous sexual nature. She told me about how she had gone through a period in her twenties when she tried to see how many men she could manage to date simultaneously. I told her about my affairs with women and with men I had while traveling cross country in 1990. We talked and talked until the hour just before dawn, and I felt closer to her and more like a peer to her than ever in our lives.

It wasn't always that way with us. Until I was nine years old, Diana and I shared a bedroom. Our bedroom was painted a pale green. The furniture, which my parents had bought at a bargain price at a hotel sale, was uniformly gray. My sister, who was six years older than I (and actually still is), dominated the room *and* me. She showed her affection and power over me by holding me down on the bed and tickling me on the stomach with her long hair, paying no attention to my yells for mercy. (To this day, I dislike being tickled.) Diana and I would fight over who would get dressed in front of the heating vent during the long cold upstate New York winters — my parents were big believers in energy conservation before it became fashionable so we dreaded get-

**Sister** continues on page 6



BBWN members carrying the banner in the 1998 Boston Pride March.

Photo by Janice Philpot

### Uncontrollable Bodies

By Lisa Brown

When I was a kid I pretended that my brother Dan and I were twins. Despite the fact that he was nearly four years older, I thought we were so alike that we had come from the same moment of conception. I was the female version of him, and he was the male version of me. We even looked more like each other than like either of our parents. We were twins born three years and nine months apart: not twins separated at birth, twins separated by birth. During the three years when Dan was an only child and the nine months when he was an expectant sibling, he was the incomplete half of a developing whole. He was frozen. He must have been aware part of him was absent. He was waiting for me.

When I had nightmares as a child I was afraid to get out of bed because I thought alligators swam in my floor. My parent's room was immediately to the right of mine. My brother's room was twenty paces down the long black hallway, past the black hole kitchen where roaches sometimes lived, up five steps, beyond the frightening stairs to the roof, through a door, and up three more steps to his loft bed. Inevitably, I always

**Bodies** continues on page 7

#### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Biphobia in Bay Windows..... 3

Forever Feminist.....4

N.O.W. Declaration.....5

Bi by Choice?...10

Globe Opens Personals to Bis.....6

Calendar.....11,12

## Volunteers of the Month

Jeanne  
Debbie Block-  
Schwenk  
Ellen Cullen  
Linda Blair  
Lynn Rosenbaum  
Sarah Hickok  
Rosalie  
Linda Dyndiuk  
Robyn Ochs  
Kate Griffin



*And many more  
wonderful  
women! You  
know who you  
are! Thank you,  
thank you, thank  
you!*

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published  
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this  
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on  
recycled paper

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## Two Prides: Twice the Fun!

Dear Readers,

It's hard to believe it's August already. But what a summer it's been so far, with those of us here in Boston getting to celebrate GLBT and Allies Pride Day *twice*, after a torrential downpour on June 13 forced organizers to reschedule the event to July 11. But despite the postponement, BBWN had a good turnout with fun had by all at its pre-pride party at Robyn's house on Friday, June 12. Then BBWN once again hosted the traditional Bi Pride Brunch overlooking Copley Square on the morning of the 13th. I was excited to coordinate the annual brunch for the second year in a row and would like to thank Laura Sachs, Debbie Block-Schwenk, Lynn Rosenbaum, Julie T., Lynne Levine, and everyone else who helped make this event a big success! Well over 40 of us gathered to enjoy each other's company and celebrate our community. With the rain pouring down outside and the Pride parade and festival postponed, we stayed put and extended our good time into the early afternoon. Thanks also to the Community Church of Boston for inviting us to do so.

Having Pride postponed certainly didn't dampen our spirits. Our July Pride celebration was fun, energetic and, best of all, dry. BBWN and the Bi Resource Center stocked up on all the bi visibility merchandise like buttons, Bisexual Pride T-shirts, and new bi triangles bumper stickers, so if you missed our table at Pride, check out the BRC and BBWN web sites at [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org) or call the bi office at (617) 424-9595 to order any or all of these items.

I especially hope you enjoy this issue of *BiWomen*, which offers a variety of interesting perspectives and insights on the theme of "Sisterhood," as I expect it to be one of my last as co-editor. Over the next few months, I am planning to transition out of my responsibilities on the *BiWomen* editorial staff as added employment and other activities begin to fill much of the coveted free time I have devoted to the newsletter and other BBWN volunteer projects over the past four years. Editing *BiWomen* has been a wonderful experience which has taught me a great deal

about myself, others, and this diverse, exciting, and beautiful bisexual and allied community that we have all helped to create. Thank you for your readership and participation which has made this rich and valuable opportunity possible.

Very truly yours,  
Linda Blair

*P.S. - If any of you women out there are interested in getting involved in the editing and publishing of this fabulous newsletter, contact BiWomen co-editor Ellyn Ruthstrom at [eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu) or (781) 393-9103. Trust me - you'll be glad you did!*

## Next in *Bi Women*:

The BiWomen theme for Oct/Nov is:

### Coming of Age

What were your "Coming of Age" experiences like? When did they take place and how or why did they affect you? When did you feel you became a woman? When did you recognize your sexuality? Coming out, college, feminism, art, friends - what has changed your life? Share the stories that helped shape who you have become.

DEADLINE: September 4, 1998

## Please Submit to *Bi Women*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to [lindab@shore.net](mailto:lindab@shore.net) and

[eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu).

*If you do not want your name published, please tell us.*

All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

## BBWN Veteran Blasts *Bay Windows* Columnist

The following letter by BBWN co-founder Robyn Ochs appeared in the June 4 issue of *Bay Windows*, which describes itself as "New England's Largest Gay and Lesbian Newspaper." Robyn was writing in response to a column which had been published in the weekly paper two issues prior. In that column, regular *Bay Windows* columnist Jim Gilbert had written on his views about how to refer to what is generally called the queer or GLBT community, but which, he concludes, he'll keep calling the "gay and lesbian" community. Space constraints and good judgment won't allow us to reprint Gilbert's column here, but, as you can imagine from Robyn's response, it helped illustrate why we need to keep up our collective efforts to educate about bisexuality and advocate for tolerance and inclusion everywhere, including in the halls and pages of our "Gay and Lesbian" organizations and media.

I read Jim Gilbert's opinion[ated] piece in the May 21st edition of *Bay Windows* with disappointment.

The most telling flaw in Gilbert's argument lies in the second paragraph of his essay, as he looks back on the days when lesbians were demanding that the term "gay community" be expanded to "gay and lesbian community." He says "What possible harm could it lead to if we lend them half the title?" This is clearly the voice of someone who feels he is very powerful and holds ownership rights over our community. Well, Jim Gilbert, you don't have ownership, and your patronizing attitude offends me.

Inclusion is not about an entitled group of privileged citizens deigning to open up the big door to let their inferiors in. Inclusion is about acknowledging what already is.

When we (all of us) insist on civil rights, respect and acknowledgement in the mainstream community, we do not ask as outsiders. We are pointing out that we are already here, we have been there for a long time, and we ask that our presence as citizens be recognized, legally, culturally, and interpersonally.

Same for bisexuals and transgendered folks in the "gay and lesbian community." I am already part of what you call the "gay and lesbian community" and what I call the "lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered communities." I've been active in the Boston community since the early 1980s, and I'll continue to be here with or without your permission. Because, Jim, I don't care how gay and white and conservative and empowered you are, honey, this is one fact beyond your control. It would be a lot easier for me and for a lot of my bi and transgendered friends and allies, as well as for my forward thinking gay and lesbian friends and allies, if you and others would acknowledge reality. Because that's what you're being asked to do when you're asked to use inclusive language: acknowl-

edge what already exists. I'm not asking for your permission to be here.

You say, "I'm not even sure 'bisexual' belongs in our title. After all, if I'm bisexual, doesn't that mean that I live at least half my life as a straight person?"

Jim, I'm bisexual, and I do not maintain two separate lives. I'm out as bisexual everywhere. I have one life, and a very good one at that. My partner is a lesbian whom I love deeply, and I don't hide her away half of the time. Furthermore, I've been bisexual every day of the past 20 years, whether or not I was in a relationship.

You say, "If you want to be part of an oppressed minority, I really think you should be required to spend all your time there."

Unfortunately, I do spend all of my time as part of an oppressed group, Jim. Bisexuals, when up against homophobes don't get half gay-bashed, lose half our jobs, or get custody of half of our children because we are bisexual. And what does "spending all your time there" mean? What about gay and lesbian people who aren't out at work, or to their families. Since they're not spending all their time being oppressed, should they not be allowed in your gay and lesbian community? Again, we're back to the issue of ownership. You don't have the right to decide. Sorry, Jim.

Furthermore, common oppression is not what makes us a community. We have created a wonderful, diverse, vibrant and exciting subculture (actually, subcultures), and I love (most) of what we've created. That's why I'm involved, that's why I go to events, that's why I care.

I'm sorry that you are having such a hard time accepting reality, but I am not going to disappear, or keep quiet, to make you or homophobic straight people more comfortable. I'm here. Get used to it.

Robyn Ochs  
Cambridge, MA



### Bi Guide Needs Volunteers!

Boston area volunteers are needed for data entry, proof reading and to help with mailings for the 1999 Bisexual Resource Guide, due to be published in January by the Bisexual Resource Center. The new guide is expected to include listings of over 2,000 bi and bi-inclusive organizations from around the world and articles on the latest information every bisexual will want to know. Resource Guide Editor and BBWN co-founder Robyn Ochs assures us this will be the biggest and the best Resource Guide yet! To get on the volunteer list, contact Robyn at [ochs@bi.org](mailto:ochs@bi.org) or (617) 576-1066.

### New Hampshire Group Forming

A bisexual women's resource and support group has started meeting every 1st and 3rd Thursday, 7 pm at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State Street in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Info: Sue at [schmoo@ultranet.com](mailto:schmoo@ultranet.com) or (603) 431-1669.



Call for Papers:  
*Feminist Theory*

*Feminist Theory* is a new international interdisciplinary journal being published by SAGE Publications in April 2000. The journal is being launched to provide a forum for critical analysis and constructive debate within feminist theory. *Feminist Theory* will be genuinely interdisciplinary and will reflect the diversity of feminism, incorporating perspectives from across the broad spectrum of the humanities and social sciences and the full range of feminist political and theoretical stances. The journal will be published three times a year starting in April 2000. If you are interested in submitting a manuscript contact: The Editors, *Feminist Theory*, Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, Heslington, York, YO1 5DD, Email: sfj3@york.ac.uk

## Forever Feminist

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

I've always been a feminist, they just don't usually call young girls feminists. Girls may be tomboys or troublemakers or bad girls, but we're not supposed to have the political understanding to claim the feminist title. I may not have known the words "patriarchy" or "phallogocentric," but I did know that boys were allowed to do lots of things that I was not. For example, when I went to elementary school in the sixties girls could not wear pants in school. During the frigid New England winters, we could only wear snowpants under our dresses if we removed them in the coat closet before entering class. I would complain ferociously about inequities such as these as well, which thoroughly perplexed those around me.

To make my nascent feminism more difficult, there was no one around me who believed what I believed. None of my girlfriends took my rantings very seriously, and my family just treated my political interests as another one of my oddities. When I discovered *Ms.* magazine some time in 1974-75 in my town's public library, I was ecstatic. There were others like me out there! And there was concrete proof in each issue that the concerns I had about women being oppressed were very real and they were global. From *Ms.* I went on to Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* and many others. There was one shelf in the town library of new feminist books that I would go to on each visit and take out anything I hadn't read yet.

I found an ad for political buttons in *Ms.*, ordered several, and started wearing them to high school. "Sisterhood is Powerful," "Sexism is a Social Disease," and one that I wore on a day I had to ask the principal to leave school early "Schools Spread Sexism." I also started to wear a tie to school, usually on the same days that our football team would wear theirs to mark that they had a game that night. When my teachers would ask me why I was wearing it I would just say "Game night." Besides liking ties a great deal, I also wanted to mock the football players for all of the power they wielded in the classes and hallways of the school.

Finally, when I got to college, I found some other like-minded women. Soon after arriving on campus I saw an announcement to watch a film about women and discuss it. It was sponsored by something called the Women's Collective. Wow, I'd found them!! I was so excited. The Collective would become one of my main organizational endeavors at college. This was not a large organization, mind you; on a small church-affiliated campus in northeast Ohio there were not many young women looking to rattle the status quo. The core of the group was actually faculty and

staff; the coordinator was the dean of women (what an archaic title now). In the four years I was part of the collective, we sponsored films, discussions, panels, retreats, and one year a full Women's Week of activities. Mostly we were a network for each other. Two of my close friends who were in the collective and who came out as lesbians after graduation, shared with me that they had their first major female crush on the coordinator. I confessed that she was my first big crush, too.

But during college I was still straight, and because I enjoyed my relationships with men so much I really didn't think that my attrac-

tion to women was anything to worry about. I was a feminist — of course I preferred spending most of my time with women and working for women's issues. I continued to identify as a straight feminist until I slept with my first woman lover at the age of 23. That experience made me realize that I wasn't particularly straight, but the love I had for my male partner always kept me from even considering that I might be a lesbian. So I realized I was bisexual without really having a name or a context for it. And I basically kept that realization to myself until I was about 28 and I met a wonderful bi woman while working for a feminist magazine in Boston. Her understanding of her own bisexuality helped me to claim it for myself as my identity, and to begin to consider how I would choose to live that identity.

Sexual identity has been a sensitive issue within the feminist movement for many years. In the sixties and seventies, many lesbians felt shut



Ellyn speaking at a rally for the Reproductive Freedom Committee in Northampton, MA in 1991.

out of the movement by homophobic straight feminists. But lesbians forced the issue in the movement, became much more visible and became some of the more active movers and shakers and theorists. Meanwhile, the media was trying to convince mainstream America that if you were a feminist then you were a dyke. On the same side of the coin, some lesbians were using the slogan: If feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice. That's a lot of politics hanging over who turns you on or who you are going to make your life with. And that effected a lot of people: lesbians who couldn't confess to sometimes dating or being attracted to men, straight women who were attracted to women but couldn't commit to a radical lesbian life.

Throughout my twenties and thirties I have been politically active with different feminist organizations wherever I lived – both here and abroad – and I have been lucky enough to make my living working for feminist publications and organizations. As a vocal bi woman, I know that

my political commitment has been questioned at times due to my sexuality, especially when there is a man in my life, but not only then. And I don't know how many times I have had younger lesbians try to tell me about feminist or lesbian history as if because I am *only* bi I don't know about it. Click!

And yet the feminist community is usually the one I feel the most at home in wherever I go. I love the feel of women working together, the comradery of a political action, the comfort of being a strong woman among other strong women. I value that I was able to come to my bisexuality through my comfort with myself as a woman, something I learned within the feminist community. Sisterhood to me IS powerful and it is forever. Despite *Time* magazine claiming in its recent article that feminism is dead, I would say that until patriarchy is dead there will always be a reason to be a feminist. ▽



## Swim for Life

The 11th Annual Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life is set for Saturday, September 12, 1998. All proceeds from the swim will benefit Provincetown AIDS organizations. The swim begins at 11:00 am. and is approximately 1.4 miles. Non-competitive and competitive swimmers are welcome. Pledge minimum is \$100 and must be collected before the swim date. Contact Swim for Life, P.O. Box 819, Provincetown, MA 02657, 508-487-3684, [reroot@tiac.net](mailto:reroot@tiac.net), [www.ptownlib.com/swim.html](http://www.ptownlib.com/swim.html)

## Excerpts from the 1998 Declaration of Sentiments of the National Organization for Women

**O**n this twelfth day of July, 1998, the delegates of the National Organization for Women gather in convention on the one hundred and fiftieth year of the women's rights movement. We bring passion, anger, hope, love and perseverance to create this vision for the future:

*We envision a world where women's equality and women's empowerment to determine our own destiny is a reality;*

*We envision a world where women have equal representation in all decision-making structures of our societies;*

*We envision a world where social and economic justice exist, where all people have the food, housing, clothing, health care, and education they need;*

*We envision a world where there is recognition and respect for each person's intrinsic worth as well as the rich diversity of the various groups among us.*

*We envision a world where non-violence is the established order;*

*We envision a world where patriarchal culture and male dominance no longer oppress us or our Earth;*

*We envision a world where women and girls are heard, valued and respected.*

Our is a movement that directs our love for humanity into action that spans the world and unites women. It is a movement that is both multi-issue and multi-strategic. But our future requires us to know our past...

Those who carried the struggle for women's suffrage through to its end were not there at the start; those who started the struggle did not live to see the victory. Like those strong feminist activists, we will not let ourselves be dispirited or discouraged. Even when progress seems most illusive, we will maintain our conviction that the work itself is important. For it is the work that enriches our lives; it is the work that unites us; it is the work that will propel us into the next century. We know that our struggle has made a difference, and we reaffirm our faith that it will continue to make a difference for women's lives.

Today we dedicate ourselves to the sheer joy of moving forward and fighting back.



### *Boston Globe* Opens Personals Pages to Bis

Looking for someone to spend those hot summer nights with? Well, if you've been looking for her or him in all the wrong places, now you can try one more. On June 2, 1998, the *Boston Globe* changed its personals policy to accept ads which include the word bisexual.

Arthur Cohen, a local bi community member who is active with the Bisexual Resource Center and Biversity Boston, successfully advocated for the new policy after being told that he would have to change the heading and wording of the personal ad he wanted to place. According to Cohen, there wasn't much resistance to changing the policy and *Globe* employees were as surprised and perplexed by it as he was. In an email on the subject, Cohen wrote that "There was no policy per se, it was someone's individual decision four years ago to set up the 'check boxes' without including bisexual as an option. And I guess until now no one forced them to review that simpleminded act. A little hard to believe perhaps, but, being familiar with corporate bureaucratic operations, it seems indeed plausible."

*continues on next page*

### **Sister** from page 1

ting out from under the covers — and she usually won.

Finally, at age nine I moved into my own room. I went with my mom to pick out wallpaper. There was this fantastic, colorful wallpaper covered with animals, like being at the circus. I told my mom that's what I wanted, but she said it was too childish and I wouldn't like it for long. To my dismay, my mom, in her usual efficient way, went right to the wallpaper on sale. It was in a colonial design, with a choice of two background colors — off-white or bright red. Despite my mother's advice that the white would be the more rational choice, I knew I wanted the red without hesitation. And so I had my own bright red room, all to myself, away from my sister's rule. It was soon covered with posters of Middle Earth, Star Trek, sailing ships, and stars from the old movies.

Diana eventually moved up to the attic bedroom in her own search for independence from our parents. It was even colder in the winter and hot as hell in summer, but my sister chose to struggle with the discomfort rather than with the rest of the family. Her room had the funky air of the late sixties, with psychedelic posters and macrame art. She was becoming a free spirit, and had major fights with my parents, which I sometimes overheard in fear and awe. The biggest one I remember was over Diana dating a young black man. My parents were terrified they would get married, and have to deal with heavy racism. My sister completely stood up for herself, and won. My parents weren't happy about it, but I think my parents were more afraid of my sister's anger than of anyone else's opinion.

I was starting adolescence, and my opinion of my sister was rising rapidly. I thought she was beautiful, brave, talented, and ambitious. Rather than compete with her, I developed an emotional crush. When she went off to college, her mystique was raised a few notches. Visiting her at college was the highlight of my life at the time. I loved to hang out in her student apartments with her long-haired hippie friends who played guitar and talked about radical politics. When she took me to my first "R" rated movie, I thought I would die from excitement. When she was home on break, I would fix her fancy snacks and bring them to her while she was studying just to be close to her.

I don't know when I started to notice that my sister wasn't perfect. Maybe it was on one of my visits, when I went with her on a bank errand. When the teller wouldn't do as she wanted, Diana stood there and swore at him at the top of her voice and stormed out of the



*Brother Peter, big sister Diana, and Annie in their Easter best, 1960.*

bank. I was scared that she might some day turn her temper on me. On some level, I also knew that it was a handicap for her. It was the beginning of a slow realization that not only did we have our own strengths and difficulties, but that I did not necessarily come up short in the comparison.

Since those days, my sister has earned a Master's Degree at an Ivy League school, and has a successful career in a non-traditional field for women. Where I have struggled with my work life, work has always been a centerpiece of her life. She dresses in power suits and goes on frequent business trips. She has been married and divorced and married again. She has one child, a "house-husband," and a house in the suburbs. As she has been more open with me, I have found her life has not been idyllic. Her marriage has been problematic, and she has struggled with depression and Attention Deficit Disorder. Diana confessed to me this year that she only realized in the past few years that she's "not perfect," and that her interpersonal style has not always gotten her what she wanted in her relationships at home and at work.

I still admire and love my sister. I'm glad we have stayed close over the years, and now have a peer relationship. Diana is the most accepting in my family of my bisexuality. While she never seriously considered women as an option for herself, she is a firm believer in people having the right to any sexual orientation they choose. When we're together, I point out people I think

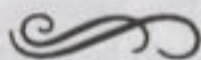
**Sister** *continues on next page*

## Bodies from page 1

chose to find safety in my brother's room. My brother didn't like having me sleep with him because I spread myself out in his tiny bed. I kicked him and I stole the blankets, but he never complained. He never told me to stop crawling into his bed at night.

In his middle school years my brother became obsessed with other worlds. I was seven, eight, nine, ten, and listened at his door as he and his friends battled witches and dragons, as they saved princesses and found hidden keys: Dungeons and Dragons. No matter how many times my brother explained it to me, I didn't understand the appeal of his imaginary world which was built and destroyed by turning dice. A crevice began to break the smooth surface of our relationship. There were differences between us and D&D was the first one that caught my attention. He rolled colored-jewel dice in his palms: triangles, hexagons, eight sides, twenty sides, opaque blue, translucent red, kick dragon, walk three steps, save person in danger. While he played games with friends in his room, I played games with mine as well. I locked the door to my room and made out with my female friends. As young as seven years old, we knew how to make each other feel good. I got on top of Annie, Sarah, or Melissa (I was always the boy) and rocked back and forth like I saw in the movies. And while I was in my room, Dan was in his room, riding an imaginary horse to save a fabricated princess.

Dan had very few friends in high school. Starting in ninth grade, when he went to a new school, he seemed to have problems relating to his classmates. As I grew older, taller, hairy, wide with hips, Dan seemed to stay the same age — at least his body did. When I was ten he was fourteen, but he looked twelve. When I was twelve he was sixteen but looked twelve. I was fourteen, he was eighteen, he looked fourteen. He



## Sister continued from previous page

are gay, lesbian, or bi, and she is mystified but fascinated by the concept of "gaydar." When her assistant at work came out to her as a lesbian, my sister told her it was "no big deal." She is the one in my family who gets the fullest picture of my life. Despite her lack of "perfection," my sister showed me more than any of the other women in my family what it looked like to be a strong, smart woman who believed in her abilities and went after what she wanted in life. Now I know I turned out to be one, too.



still had his smooth, round boyish face and odd voice. I grew and I grew, but he stayed the same. I started talking about boys (and secretly looking at girls) but my brother rarely mentioned any interest in women. Both physically and emotionally, the disparity between our three years and nine months diminished every day. A serious condition attacked from within my brother, a double agent in his blood, in his chromosomes, his thalamus gland, his sperm. At sixteen, he was diagnosed with Kallmann's syndrome. Sixteen, a junior in high school, and he looked my age. People thought we were twins. It is a syndrome that attacks where a person is most sensitive — at the ego — at a time when that ego is most fragile — in high school. Medically, it is a serious syndrome, but at that time the emotional pain scarred my brother most. Surrounded by high school teenagers who talked about having sex, flexed their developing muscles in wrestling matches, and used achievement in sports as a status symbol, my brother still looked like a young boy. I doubt he had interest in sex. In fact, I think he was afraid of it. His tiny size and thin, lanky build made it impossible for him to compete in sports. He was an outcast.

During his second year in high school, Dan took a drawing class. He was a talented artist and my parents were happy he had decided to take the course. He came home very upset one day: "They had a nude model in the class," he told me.

"What did you do?" I giggled.

"I left the class."

"Why?"

"Because it made me uncomfortable!" He was irritated I didn't understand.

"Where did you go?"

"I sat outside in the hallway and drew the lockers."

Bodies continues on page 8



## Globe Personals continued

Once the policy was changed, the *Globe* agreed to run Cohen's ad for free. In just the few days it took him to place the ad, another "bisexual" ad had already appeared, hinting at just how many people must have been affected by this discriminatory policy.

To take advantage of this new opportunity to meet potentially hot dates by placing your own ad, you can call the *Globe* personals line at 1-800-770-2770. The *Globe* is also sponsoring a party for all personal ad users this summer on the cruise ship *Odyssey*.

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## OutVote '98: The Lesbian & Gay Political Convention

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender activists will be meeting to discuss issues facing our communities and strategizing to continue the fight for civil rights on September 17-20, 1998 in Washington, DC. As part of the convention, the Human Rights Campaign will hold its second national dinner on Saturday, September 19, 1998. Dr. Maya Angelou will be the keynote speaker and the first National Family Civil Rights Award will be presented to Melissa Etheridge and Julie Cypher. For registration information about all of the events, contact: Human Rights Campaign, 1101 14th St., N.W., Ste. 200, Washington, DC 20005, 202-628-4160, [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org).

## Bodies from page 7

I remember that at the end of that trimester, Dan brought home a stack of drawings of lockers: pen and inks, charcoals, pencil drawings, paintings. He had spent the entire semester drawing lockers in the hallway. My parents seemed to find his modesty endearing. They never talked to my brother about his insecurity. I thought it was odd that he wouldn't stay in the class. Doesn't every boy want to see women naked? My dad read *Playboy Magazine*, the boys in my class snapped our bra straps; isn't that what guys were supposed to do? Even I wanted to look at naked women. I didn't tell him that, however, because I barely knew it was true. Or why it was true.

Like my budding bisexuality, my brother's medical problems, were not normal. I learned later, for my family never told me at the time, that without the stimulation of testosterone injections Dan would never go through puberty. He had to continue receiving hormones every two weeks by injection or every day by adhesive patches for the rest of his life. In years to come we learned more about the illness. He has no sense of smell, and he is sterile. But these things were made clear to us slowly, a trickle of knowledge filtering through after each doctor appointment. The doctors seemed to know as little as we did. I once asked my mother why my brother and I get along so well. All of my friends despised their siblings. To this she said, "I don't know what your Dad and I did to help you get along, if anything at all. You and Dan have been incredibly close since you were born."

But, I always wanted a reason. Most of my

friends' brothers spent their younger years giving my friends noogies and bruises and wedgies, but my brother never did. If testosterone is often what drives men to violence then wouldn't it follow that the lack of testosterone in my brother made him less aggressive? Did Kallmann's help him treat me with the gentleness he did? If I believe that, then I must believe that while Kallmann's is the thing that tries to destroy him, it is also one of the things that makes him who he is.

My family never talked about Dan's illnesses. I wanted to know what was wrong with my brother but I was too embarrassed to ask because it seemed secret. There was something implied in my parents' hushed tones: we were not to talk about Dan's illnesses. I knew from their stern faces that Kallmann's was serious. It seemed like it was too serious to talk about. The vocabulary I needed in order to ask questions was made up of words that embarrassed me: puberty, pubic hair, sperm, wet dreams, sex. All I knew for certain was what I imagined: that his illness had something to do with our matching height, and the forest of hair that was appearing in my armpit, but not in his.

It is clear that neither of my parents have the emotional equipment to make my brother more comfortable with Kallmann's. It hit my father in a way that is only becoming clear now that my brother has taken control of his own health, and as Dan becomes more comfortable in his body. At a dinner conversation one evening, Dan announced he had included information about Kallmann's syndrome on his homepage. Dan had long since graduated from college and was working for an internet book publishing company designing their web site. My father sighed like he does when he is about to lecture, and shook his head. He told my brother to consider taking the information off his page. He thought that people would discriminate against Dan because of it. He thought my brother's job might be threatened. My brother was bewildered. Dan was proud of his own strength and my father seemed to be missing the point. Finally, my brother refused. "I'm not going to take it off. If anyone has a problem with Kallmann's then it is their problem. I don't care."

I later told my brother that I was proud of him, that it took guts to talk publicly about Kallmann's. I think that he needed to hear that from me. It was what he wanted to hear from my father.

In subsequent conversations, my brother and I have realized that my father's intolerance has nothing to do with Dan. My father is an art-

## Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads  
diverged in a  
yellow wood...  
and I took both

HATE IS  
**NOT**  
A FAMILY  
VALUE

### Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:  
BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

ist and a teacher and has never encouraged us to be something we are not. But I think his own manhood was threatened when my brother grew up without enough male hormones. Perhaps he sees my brother's sterility as a measure of his own virility. There is a fine line between parental over-protectiveness, and embarrassment. Is he embarrassed to have created a son whose male hormone is missing? And I wonder how it makes my brother feel that, in his father's eyes, he is not a full and complete man?

When my brother got married and became more of a "man" in the eyes of society, I was in the process of falling in love and getting my heart broken by the first woman in my life. We were each conquering the demons of love which had been plaguing us. Dan was always concerned that a woman would never be attracted to him and he would never be bold enough to find someone he loved. He felt that he was somehow deformed by his illness.

Dan believed that no woman could ever fall in love with his broken down body. But the damage was mostly imagined. With the aid of testosterone injections his body functioned like any other man's. While the hormone made his dysfunctional body seamless, it did not bridge the gap which left him emotionally scarred. The injections made him physically "normal" but did not provide him with the emotional distance to see himself that way. He always looked in the mirror and saw damaged goods. Meeting the woman he married helped him realize that much of the scarring was emotional, not physical, that he was living like an anorexic who sees a different image of herself than what is real. In marriage my brother began to understand that he had disowned his body and needed to begin the process of reclaiming it, taking his body back from the doctors, back from the illness. He began to stop thinking of himself as being trapped inside the tomb of a lifeless body.

While Dan was preparing for marriage, I was redefining my sexuality. Like Dan, I was always concerned I would never act on my love for women, that I would be forever stifled by my own fear. But, when I finally met a woman who I loved, it created new questions for me. I began to see that with falling in love, I had to begin the act of chipping away at the rules of how a woman in a relationship acts. I was no longer the female counterpart of a heterosexual relationship. Now I had to discover what love between two women could be like. It became time to confront my feminine and masculine roles in a way that scared

some of my family and friends, and intrigued others. I started to see the falsity behind the structures of the male-female roles which society encourages us to play. As I came out I adamantly rejected those roles citing my own experiences as a tomboy and my brother's struggles with enforced masculinity as my bibliography.

My brother has continued to "come out" of the Kallmann's closet in many different ways. Most recently, he started a subscriber-list on line for people who have Kallmann's Syndrome. Despite the rarity of the syndrome, he has a new subscriber every week. There are thirty of them now, from California to New York, London to Japan. Even though Kallmann's patients are affected by the Syndrome in various ways, there is one undeniable consistency: shame. Each Kallmann's patient has felt mortified by himself and his physical and emotional underdevelopment, just like queers are often afraid and embarrassed by their sexual desires. All of them, at some point in their lives, were told to not tell anyone about the syndrome.

Parents, friends, and spouses, are frightened of what might happen if people find out. People are afraid of sexual dysfunction, sexual abnormalities, and my brother and I both had to press against these walls to overcome our own prejudices. We both had to realize that we are not freaks of nature.

We are twins. Our bodies are twin bodies. I sometimes wonder where my brother's testosterone is. It belongs to him but it is not inside him. Did it hide away in my mother's womb while he was developing? Did it curl into a tiny yellow ball and hide while he was being born? Did it stay in our mother's womb, waiting for me? I find myself wondering if that globby ball of testosterone jumped inside of me when I was conceived. It made me have thick hair in my armpits, gave me a stripe of downy fuzz down the center of my stomach. Maybe Dan's misplaced testosterone makes me fall in love with women. What if I was meant to be the boy, and he was meant to be the girl? Where does his body end and mine begin? My body is lean and strong. I have never

**Bodies** continues on page 10

## NH Resource Guide Seeks Entries from Bisexual Groups and Businesses

The Gay Info Line of New Hampshire is currently putting together the 1999 Lifelines Directory for the Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans and Allies NH Community. The Lifelines directory is seeking listings from the bisexual community such as bi groups, bi magazines and newsletters, hotlines and infolines, special bi events, and businesses providing services to bis in NH, VT, and Maine. Send entries with "Attn: Lifeline Directory" as the subject line to [GAYINFONH@aol.com](mailto:GAYINFONH@aol.com)

ANNIE GOGLIA  
STORYTELLER/COACH  
WORKSHOP LEADER

127 Montgomery St.  
Cambridge, MA 02140

617-497-0510  
[kalamari@juno.com](mailto:kalamari@juno.com)



## Northwest Bis Gather in the Mountains

The Bisexual Network of Oregon will sponsor the seventh annual gathering and campout for northwest bisexuals on August 27-September 1, 1998. The gathering will take place at the Wenatchee National Forest near Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington and will include horseback riding, hiking, fishing, boating, huckleberry picking, and excursions to Mt. St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and Mt. Rainier. For more information, contact Kurt at BiNet Oregon at 541-265-5861.

## Bodies from page 9

been to the hospital. I've never even broken a bone. The only pills ever to enter my body were anti-biotics, birth control, acutane for acne, and zoloft. I see a healthy body — clean long arms and pink knees and a flat stomach and thick shiny eyebrows.

When you have an illness you learn to lie. My brother learned to make up excuses for his deteriorating voice, for his baby doll face, and his young frame. I learned to make up reasons for the women in my bed. But I have no illness. What I share with Dan is the plague that tells me to feel ashamed of myself.

Both Kallmann's and bisexuality are "conditions" which are considered genetic abnormali-

ties. While I enjoy bisexuality (despite the pain, the fear, and the prejudices) my brother will have a much more difficult time learning to love Kallmann's. It might never become an integrated part of him. It may remain a separate entity which fights against him. While I can't know what it is like to have Kallmann's, I do know how it feels to have no control of your own body, to watch it feel and react in ways you do not choose. I don't know if my brother would choose to have Kallmann's if he had a choice, the way I would choose to be bisexual. If he didn't have it then his life would be much easier and he would have been spared so much pain. He also wouldn't be the person he is. ▽

## Bi By Choice or the Effects of Androgens ?

*The following is excerpted from an article written by Terry Wilson which was published in the April 19, 1998 issue of the Chicago Tribune. Wilson is interviewing Dennis McFadden, a professor of experimental psychology at the University of Texas in Austin, who has discovered the first known example of a physiological difference between lesbians and heterosexual women.*

*Q: What led you to check the female inner ear for evidence that may be associated with sexual preference?*

A: There are a number of documented sex differences in the auditory system. Females are generally more sensitive to weak sounds when it is quiet than are males, and females are less susceptible to the aftereffects of exposure to intense sounds than are males. Males are slightly better at localizing sound sources in space. One of the major sex differences is in otoacoustic emissions — the echolike sounds that are generated in the inner ear. They are stronger in females than in males.

*Q: What interested you in these auditory system sex differences?*

A: Several years ago we tested some twins. When we measured the otoacoustic emissions of females with male co-twins, we found the females of those pairs had weaker otoacoustic emissions than did other females. Their otoacoustic emissions were more like those of males than those of other females. Because otoacoustic emissions are known to be highly constant through life, I became interested in why these females would have been born with weak emissions. An obvious answer was that females who had male co-twins had auditory systems that had been masculinized by virtue of exposure to the higher levels of androgens (male sex hormones) their male co-twins had produced during prenatal development.

*Q: Your latest study found that lesbians and bisexual women (without twins) have these weaker otoacoustic emissions?*

A: Yes. And something that was begging for recognition here was that the exposure to androgens, which are needed to produce a male fetus, also produces these differences in the auditory systems of females we were seeing. [Androgens] are there naturally. Both sexes need exposure to both androgens and estrogens in prenatal development as well as later in life. Females produce more estrogens, and males produce more androgens. But everybody has a mix.

*Q: So your findings suggest that sexual orientation is biological?*

A: That is what is strongly implied by the data. We don't know that, but it is an implication... This is the first demonstration that we know of that shows a physiological difference in the nervous systems of heterosexual females and homosexual females.

*Q: And sexual orientation might be set at birth?*

A: There is that implication, but one has to be careful. Any complex human behavior has large environmental as well as genetic and developmental aspects to it. But this strongly suggests that there is a physiological or biological contribution to homosexuality in females.

*Q: You mentioned earlier that females with male co-twins are exposed to high levels of androgens prenatally. Do they tend to be gay?*

A: That is not well-researched, but the prevalence of homosexuality does not appear to be elevated in those women. ▽

## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

### September 1 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9 p.m. (see August 4)

### September 2 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see August 5)

### September 4 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions

**Deadline.** This issue's topic is "Coming of Age." What has felt like "Coming of Age" events or experiences in your life? How and why did they affect you? Share the stories that helped shape who you have become. Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news and views to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail text only (not images) to [both.lindab@shore.net](mailto:both.lindab@shore.net) and [eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu).

Please Con-  
tribute - It's  
Your News-  
letter!

### September 6 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. The first hour's topic is "Celibacy, Monogamy, and Polyamory." (see August 2)

### September 9 ♦ Wednesday

**BBWN Introductory Meeting.** A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 p.m.- 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. All members and friends of the bi community are welcome to attend.

### September 12 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Naturist Swimming Trip.** Meet at 9 a.m. outside the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston to car-pool to the Cummington clothing-optional swimming site in Western Mass. Bring a towel, food, sun-screen and shoes you can wade in for crossing a shallow, but rocky river.

### September 13 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity "More Tales" Marathon.** 3 p.m. Lynne will host this showing of all episodes of "More Tales of the City." Please bring munchies or beverages to share. To RSVP and for directions, contact Lynne at (617) 629-3170 or email [llevine@mit.edu](mailto:llevine@mit.edu).

### September 15 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see August 5)

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. (see August 4)

### September 19 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. on the patio at Skipjack's on Route 9 near Brookline Village. Near the Brookline Village stop on the D Branch of the Green Line.

### September 20 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch.** Noon. Join us for fun, food and fabulous women at Gene and Kate's in Jamaica Plain. Bring something scrumptious to share and come tell us all the exciting things you did this summer. Info and directions: (617) 522-8085. T accessible. All self-identified women welcome.



### September 27 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1 p.m. Come enjoy Boston's best Ethiopian food at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont Street in the South End. Near the Boston Center for the Arts. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

### September 29 ♦ Tuesday

**BBWN Dinner.** 6 p.m. Enjoy dinner with other members and friends of BBWN. Bertucci's, 49 Stanhope St., Boston. After dinner, we'll go to the Bi Office for the BiWomen mailing.

**BiWomen mailing.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. Come chip in to get BiWomen out to all our wonderful subscribers from all over the world. It's a great chance to socialize and make new friends.

*Biversity Boston is the  
mixed gender bisexual  
Network of Greater  
Boston.*

Saturday, October 3 & Sunday, October 4, 1998

## Speaking Out

**Designed for Anyone Who Wants to Use  
Public Speaking as a Tool for Social Change**

SpeakOut, formerly known as the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau of Boston, will hold it's annual two day training for speaking on sexual orientation and gender identity issues at the Porter Square Exchange building at 1815 Mass. Ave. in Cambridge. Everyone of all orientations and genders are welcome. SpeakOut schedules speaking engagements in the Boston area which educate on and increase public awareness of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity. No obligation to participate in speaking engagements is required to attend. Registration is \$70 (more if you can, less if you can't); \$35 low income & college student rate; \$20 for teens 14 - 17 y.o. Info: (617) 450-9581 x 3.

### BiWomen Subscription Form

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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

BBWN

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## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe', right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe'. For info call (617) 424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call (617) 354-8807.

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk.** 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### 2nd Thursdays:

**Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group.** 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: (617) 499-9612

**Bi Married Women's Support Group.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at (617) 731-9060 for info.

### 3rd Thursdays:

**SpeakOut Meeting.** 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the Bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m. with the theme program starting at 8 p.m. Info: (617) 354-0133.

# CALENDAR

## August 2 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office, 29 Stanhope St., Boston. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. The first hour's topic is "Coming Out at Work." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

## August 4 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info and topic: (617) 354-8807.

## August 5 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 424-9595.

## August 8 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Naturist Swimming Trip.** Meet at 9 a.m. outside the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston to car-pool to The Ledges clothing-optional swimming site in southern Vermont. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. Bring a towel, food, and sun-screen.



## August 9 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Trip to Canobie Lake Park,** an amusement park with water rides, roller coasters, and other exciting stuff near Salem, N.H. Meet outside and just to the right of the ticket booth at 11am. Take exit 2 off I-93 N. in New Hampshire and follow the signs. It's about a 45 minute drive from Boston. Tickets are \$17. Info: Doug at (978) 440-9781 or liyyymai@aol.com.

## August 12 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. All bi and bi-friendly people are welcome to attend.

## August 15 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. Don't miss the annual summer brunch outing to Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square, Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

## Come Welcome Back Carla and Megan!

## August 16 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch** at 11 am. Yes, it's true! Carla and Megan are back from their adventures in Africa and are inviting us all to their new place in Jamaica Plain to help welcome them home. All the great features of every BBWN brunch (great food, stimulating conversation, friendly women) plus plenty of tales of our hosts' nine months in Kenya caring for HIV+ orphans. Please bring food or drink to share. Info and directions: (617) 522-8819 or cimperial@aol.com. T accessible. All self-identified women welcome

## August 18 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see August 5)

**Bi Women's Rap Group.** 7:30-9p.m. (see August 4)

## August 22 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Trip to the Randolph Country Club.** We'll be car pooling to the G/L/B country club south of Boston. Swimming, dancing, lounging, cruising. Food available on site. Meet at 11:30 am in front of the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

## August 30 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1:00 p.m. at Mucho Gusto. Cuban food and a bi-friendly atmosphere. 1174 Boylston Street (near Mass. Ave). Nearest T stop is Aditorium/Hynes Convention Center on the Green Line.

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11

## August 13 ♦ Thursday

**BBWN Roofdeck Barbecue.** Please join us to round out the summer properly at Jeanne's in the Back Bay. Arrive anytime after 5pm - this party could go all night! If Jeanne's fondue brunch this past winter was any indication, you *really* won't want to miss this event. And besides, why should you stay in on a Thursday night when it's sooo close to the weekend? Please bring something to grill or a dish to share and your favorite beverage(s). T accessible. Info and directions: (617) 426-3486 or jhannon@ibm.net. All self-identified women welcome.



## Coming of Age

### Reflections on My First 32 Years

By Linda Blair

September 17, 1998

Tomorrow will be my 33rd birthday, so this cloudless, 80 degree afternoon seemed like a great time to escape to the relative serenity of Walden Pond for one last summer swim and to jot down a few observations on my life so far. And since it's relevant to this issue's theme, I thought I'd let you in on them.

Well, I'm not sure I know just what "Coming Of Age" is, but I'm figuring by now, I must have done it at least once or twice. To me, it sounds like something that one does many times during the course of a lifetime.

#### Kids

I've learned a few things about myself in the nearly 1/3 century I've been here. And since the four little girls sharing this side of the beach with me are, by screaming excitedly, reminding me, I've realized that at least so far, I've yet to discover even a hint of maternal instinct inside me. Kids are cute in the right doses and downright fun at times, but I can never imagine acting as a parent in any way, shape or form. Maybe the battery in my biological clock died, and if so, I'm not going to replace it.

#### Transitions

I'm not a person who generally deals well with abrupt change. It tends to take me quite a while to figure out what I want and how to get it, then longer still to actually work toward it. I view life and most everything in it as a process. Over the past five years, I've developed an interest in rock climbing, which has taught me a lot about myself. It's helped to show me in a physical sense that I'm much better at smaller moves than bigger ones. I might have to make three moves where someone else would just take one big step up. Progress is often much slower this way. But on the up side, as a climber and in most other aspects of my life, I'm persistent. So many times I've had people comment that they're amazed at how long I've stuck with trying to make it

**Reflections** continues on page 7

PHOTO: SHARON GONSALVES



Soon to be retiring *BiWomen* co-editor Linda Blair took time out from the newsletter long enough to enjoy many beautiful sunrises and sunsets on Maui and the Big Island of Hawaii in March of 1996.

### Getting Bi at Michigan: Three Women's Stories of The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, 1998

By Robyn Ochs

The 23rd Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was my first and it was, for me, the equivalent of a pilgrimage to Mecca — Lesbian Mecca. I teach a course at Tufts University called "'Family' Values: The Emergence of Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Cultures in the U.S. and Canada" and I use Michigan as a teaching tool. Like Northampton, Massachusetts, it has been a unique staging ground: cultural battles waged throughout the U.S. (and beyond) over definitions and boundaries of community and culture are enacted here in concentrated form. Six thousand women gather for several days, or, in the case of many of the volunteer workers, for a month and participate in the creation and the re-creation of community. What will be the rules of this community? Who will be admitted?

**Michigan** continues on page 4

#### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Bi Activist Writes to Rolling Stone...3

Bi Women's Rap.....6

Poetry.....7

Movie Reviews.....8,9

Bi Camp.....10

Calendar.....11,12

## Volunteers of the Month

Jeanne  
Debbie Block-  
Schwenk  
Annie Goglia  
Linda Blair  
Lynn Levine  
Megan Jewitt  
Carla Imperial  
Linda Dyndiuk  
Robyn Ochs  
Kate Griffin



*And many more  
wonderful  
women! You  
know who you  
are! Thank you,  
thank you, thank  
you!*

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published  
bi-monthly.

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Ellyn Ruthstrom

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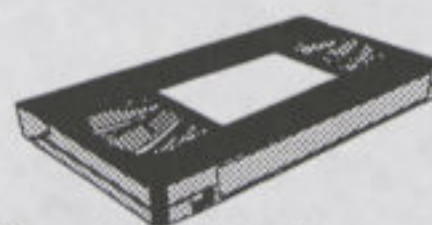
*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## Turning Over Leaves

The fall is a wonderful time to make plans for the future. In New England, fall seems to be the busiest season, with events and performances abounding. People run around like crazy doing the things they know they won't be able to do in the dead of winter. What does that have to do with anything? BBWN is seasonal, too. Sometimes it feels very bountiful and sometimes it feels a little barren. It's the cycle of life and the cycle of organizations. We are looking for a new crop of women who are interested in putting their energy into the things that keep BBWN going.

This newsletter is certainly one of the most important things that BBWN does. It helps connect the Boston bi community, and it reaches out to others around the country and around the world with current events and current bi issues. Co-editor Linda Blair has been contributing her energy to the newsletter for quite a number of years and she is ready to concentrate her efforts on other areas. There are many different ways you can get involved. Would you like to write, edit, proofread, help with the layout, find new advertisers, or run the volunteer mailing night? If you are interested in any of these things, please contact co-editor Ellyn Ruthstrom at [eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu) or leave a message at 617-926-8737.

We also have brunches to host, gatherings to plan, and lots of other possibilities ahead. The great thing about getting involved is that YOU get to choose what BBWN does. It's an open book waiting to be written on. Dare I draw on another seasonal metaphor? It's like turning over a new leaf.



## Bisexual Videostore Now Online at

[www.biresource.org/videostore](http://www.biresource.org/videostore)

The Bisexual Resource Center in Boston is pleased to announce the opening of the Bisexual Videostore. In cooperation with Reel.com, the BRC will be offering videos with bisexual characters for *sale* or *rent* via the web. The URL for the Bisexual Videostore is: <http://www.biresource.org/videostore>.

Many films with bi characters are in the theaters only briefly and can be difficult to locate at your nearby lackluster video store. This is especially true if you don't live in a large city. The videostore currently lists more than 125 films with bi characters. Several more will be added in the coming weeks. There is also a search feature available to locate other films in the huge Reel.com catalog.

As with the bisexual bookstore (<http://www.biresource.org/bookstore>), all purchases and rentals generate a small "finders fee" which helps finance the work of the Bisexual Resource Center. BRC projects this year include the 5th International Bisexual Conference held this past April at Harvard University, a new edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide to be released in January 99, expanding the [biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org) website, updating and distributing pamphlets about bisexuality, and maintaining the bisexual archives.



## Please Submit to *BiWomen!*

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to [lindab@shore.net](mailto:lindab@shore.net) and  
[eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu).

*If you do not want your name published,  
please tell us.*

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## Bi Activist Writes to Rolling Stone

This July, Rolling Stone magazine published an article on queer youth. In the article, Kelli Peterson, the young woman who started the Gay/Straight Alliance in Salt Lake City, talks about the rumors surrounding the suicide of Jacob Orosco, the young man from the group who was also receiving national attention. Regarding one of the rumors she states:

"I'll probably get in trouble if you put this in the article, but he was having some problems recently because he was attracted to girls. I think it's a real problem drawing lines so sharply between gay and straight. Jacob had always really defined himself as being gay. But he hung around a lot at the club scene, and he'd been spotted more than once making out with a girl. There were rumors that he was having sexual activity with her. He got guilt from his friends, people at the club. I honestly think that one of the reasons he committed suicide was that he was afraid of being ostracized. When everybody expects you to be gay, and you get that message from just about everybody, what happens to you? It's like having to go through that whole coming-out process in your head again. And having to reverse everything you've done mentally."

After reading the article, Bisexual Resource Center activist Pete Chvany sent the following letter to Rolling Stone, hoping to help other people of all ages who have been or fear they would be ostracized by others because of their feelings of potential attraction to people of more than one sex or gender. Kelli Peterson's testimony is yet one more vivid illustration of the desperate need for education about and a deeper understanding and acceptance of bisexuality in all sectors of society.

(via the internet)

Date: Wed, 22 Jul 1998 15:16:34 -0400 (EDT)

From: Pete Chvany <khvastun@world.std.com>

To: letters@rollingstone.com

Subject: Letter re: Gay Youth

To: Rolling Stone

In an article filled with frightening portraits of the abuse gay and lesbian youth face ("To Be Young and Gay," RS 792), and with just as many examples of the bravery with which they triumph over that abuse, the most chilling information was the possibility that Jacob Orosco committed suicide because he may not have been exclusively gay, and feared renewed ostracism, this time from the gay community.

Nearly as chilling is Kelli Peterson's fear that discussing this rumor will get her in trouble or be a PR disaster. But bravo to her for courageously raising the issue.

Whether or not Jacob Orosco had sexual attractions to both men and women, some people are bisexual.

For such people, expressing their desires is not fodder for the so-called "ex-gay" movement. For such people, bisexuality is not "going straight" or "being in denial" or "indecision." It need not entail "promiscuity." It is certainly no betrayal of gay and lesbian communities, and no cause for guilt-trips or criticism. It's an orientation of its own, and a community which has contributed its share to the fight against sexuality-based oppression.

While some bisexuals have experienced the ostracism Jacob may have feared, many are welcome, active members of queer communities.

We need to make the world much safer for gay youth, lesbian youth, bisexual youth, transgender youth—indeed, making youth in general a safer experience for all would surely benefit us all. We must not lose youth who may not be exclusively gay, or who may simply need time to grow into their sexualities, whatever those may be.

Support is available. The Bisexual Resource Center provides information for people who are bisexual or think they may be attracted to people of more than one sex or gender. The Center provides a variety of resources including a series of pamphlets about and a bibliography of reading materials on bisexuality, and comprehensive listings of bisexual and bi-friendly social and support groups throughout the US and many other countries. Contact:

Bisexual Resource Center, P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140 USA

Telephone: 617/424-9595

www.biresource.org/ email: brc@biresource.org

Pete Chvany  
Medford, MA

### Next in *Bi Women*:

The BiWomen theme for Dec/Jan is:

#### Politics

Are you politically active or are you completely fed up with the political system? What were the results of elections in your area? How did out queer candidates do in their races? What is queer politics these days? Too radical, too conservative? Tell us what you would do if you were...queen!

DEADLINE: October 30, 1998

February/March theme:

*The Cyber Issue*



*Hey, all you party animals out there! Get ready for another rockin' good time at this year's BBWN holiday party coming up at Ananda and Amy's. Watch for details in the Dec./Jan issue of BiWomen.*

#### BRC "Wish List"

The Bisexual Resource Center would greatly appreciate donations of any of the following items. If you would like to donate any of these things, please write to us at brc@biresource.org or call us at (617) 424-9595. We would be happy to pick up donated items anywhere in the Boston area. Thanks.

- \* a 56K or 28.8 external modem
- \* a zip drive or similar computer back-up system
- \* Zip disks or tapes
- \* A fax machine
- \* A literature rack
- \* 2 drawer filing cabinets
- \* Bookshelves and/or a bookcase
- \* Books on bisexuality or with bi themes

## Call for papers

Submissions are requested for a proposed volume on the work experiences of women in mid-life. Possible topics include: career stagnation/advancement; the 'invisible woman' in the workplace; effects of restructuring and downsizing; interpersonal workplace issues for women; comparisons between experiences of women of different class and ethnic groups; mid-career experiences of those in traditional women's jobs and non-traditional work, including the professions. Abstracts should be submitted by December 15, 1998. Papers will be due by May 31, 1999 and final selection of papers will be made by July 15, 1999. Send abstracts to: Jane Gordon, Sociology and Anthropology Department, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 2J6; or call 902-457-6837; e-mail: Jane.Gordon@MSVU.CA

## Michigan from page 1

Over the years, Michigan has been the site of extensive negotiations, which have often continued for months and sometimes years in the pages of women's and lesbian publications such as *Lesbian Connection* and *Off Our Backs*. Debates have raged over many issues including whether transsexual women should be permitted to attend the festival; what to do about boy children (at what age do boy children emit sufficient "male energy" to be excluded, and how can women and their male children be accommodated?); how and where s/m (and its symbolic manifestations such as leather and collars) would be allowed; whether it is empowering or divisive for women of color to create a separate space; what kind of food will be served; what to do about alcohol and other drugs; what kind of music is permissible (there was a controversy a few years ago over a performance by Tribe 8); how to be sensitive to women who are survivors of abuse and/or addiction while protecting other women's freedom of self-expression, and so on. In short, women of so many different varieties, including heterosexual and bi women, come together year after year to negotiate the rules and boundaries of community. What an amazing opportunity, and how intimidated I felt. As a bi woman, I spent so many years feeling like an outsider; would I feel welcome at Michigan?

But I really wanted to go, and together with my partner — who identifies as lesbian and attended the very FIRST Michigan Womyn's Festi-

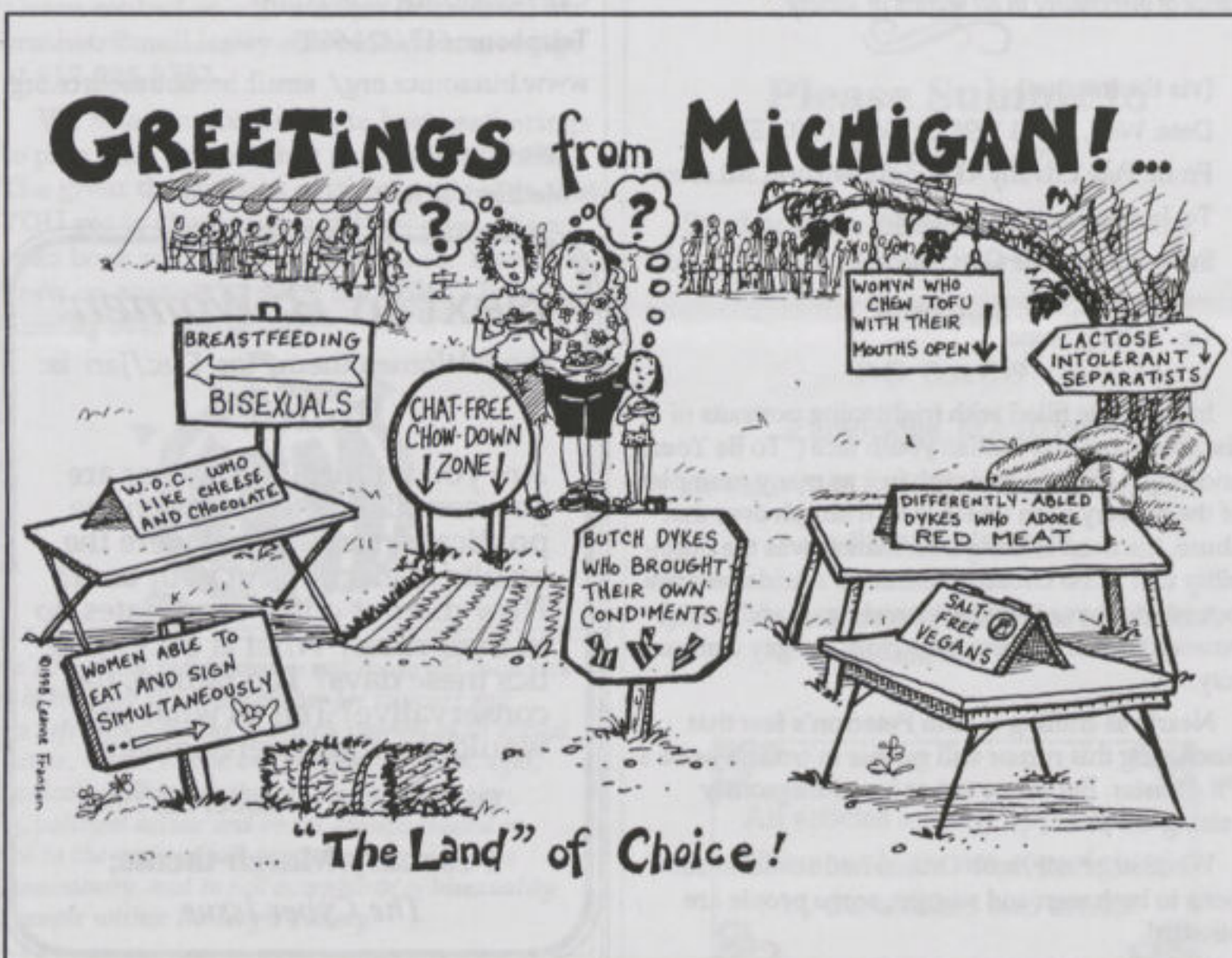
val when she was 17 — flew to Michigan and were shuttled, along with a busload of other women and our tents, backpacks and Thermarest pads, to the festival site.

AND...I had a wonderful time! A few of my favorite highlights of the festival: Alice Walker reading from her forthcoming novel (which has quite a lot of bisexual content), the Indigo Girls, Ferron, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and an amazing trapeze act which made me think of the scenes from *When Night is Falling*.

By Sheryl Barnes

Part of what makes Michigan work is work shifts. All the "festies" (women attending the festival, as opposed to workers) do two work shifts, helping out anywhere from the kitchen to the porta janes. This helps keep the cost of the festival low, in addition to giving everyone a sense of involvement and purpose. I selected the sanitation crew, with whom I mastered the fine art of the TP toss, as we restocked the portajanes (6-7 rolls each, restocked 3 times each day, and there are several hundred "janes" on the land, in case you are interested).

After my shift, I would have a beer with the work crew, and then make my way out of the inner workers camp, back out into the main festival site. As I reached the main road, I was surprised to see a tree walking by. I was particularly amused by the thought that it was moving aw-



fully fast for a tree. Speaking to the tree, I discovered that she was in some distress. In fact, not only was she lost, but she was, in fact, trapped inside the 5-foot long heavy cardboard cylinder that was her costume. Always a sucker for a damsel or an arbor in distress and with considerable effort, I lifted the costume over the woman's head, liberating the hot, sweaty person inside.

The Michigan organizers are always coming up with new ideas to amuse the crowd, and to that end, this year's opening ceremony featured a hot air balloon that took off from the audience in front of the main stage, and on its ascent, dropped smaller balloons with red roses and good wishes attached to them onto the crowd.

Later in the festival, the first ever "festie wear" fashion show was held, to the cheers of delight from the crowd. Women of various shapes and sizes sported the best and the worst of "festie wear" and the most popular model was deluged with shouts of support and a heartfelt standing ovation as she navigated her walker down the narrow runway into the crowd and back up onto the stage again. Although we were blessed with warm sunny days and cool, clear nights, the event was not without one good dousing, which came during Toshi Reagon's performance. Toshi started her show by explaining that at the festival last year, her precious antique guitar had snapped in two as she played her first notes, and as she sat on stage and wept for 10 minutes, the audience sat in silence with her. This year, the repaired guitar was back but had been deemed too old to fly on an airplane or play in public anymore. This was to be its last performance. Halfway through Toshi's rockin' set, the goddesses let loose with an almighty downpour, which somehow managed to pour under the main tent onto the stage where the performers were playing their electric instruments. Undaunted, Toshi played on, finishing the song she was playing. Similarly, rather than run for cover, many in the audience chose to simply remove their clothes, stash them under someone else's tarp and dance joyfully to the music in the cool evening downpour.

Sunday featured a celebration with a spirit the pope himself could never have fathomed. About 70 women comprised the drumming intensive, and after a full week's practice they performed for the crowd at the acoustic stage, a natural amphitheater surrounded by pines. The day was again sunny and warm, and the drummers captured the spirit and the rhythm of a true celebration, inspiring even the hard core "non-dancers" to shake their groove thing. Following the drummers, the gospel choir raised their voices to the heavens and filled the crowd with a glorious spirit of joy, beauty, and raw female power.

I cherished each moment of the festival and brought the spirit of those women, along with the body and face paint that had been applied to me by a roving artist, all the way home with me on the plane. As I walked through O'Hare Airport, with broad streaks of blue and purple paint across both my cheeks (on my face, that is), and a deep smile in my heart from the week's events as well as the secret knowledge that the paint did not stop at the collar of my shirt, I was unphased by the perplexed looks of my fellow travelers. Only one person actually asked me about the paint - as the plane touched down in Boston, the man sitting next to me asked "Are you a Patriots fan?" I had forgotten about the paint, and thought he was just making small talk and when I realized that he was asking about my festival markings, I simply smiled and said "No," basking in the glow of the power and comfort of Michigan.

*By Chantel Guidry*

A cook in the workers' kitchen related a story while attending the workshop "Being the Sexual 'Other' at Michigan: Trans, Bi, Queer, S/M, etc. or Wondering." A few years ago, while on the land as a festie, she felt that she was surrounded by lesbians and was hesitant to come out as bisexual. One night, while relaxing around a campfire, another woman revealed that she was bisexual. It turned out that every one of the approximately two dozen women sitting there identified as bisexual but had been feeling as if she were the only bisexual woman at the festival.

On Wednesday of the festival, I attended a networking meeting for bisexual women held at Oasis, the emotional support area. These meetings were held each morning at eleven o'clock. I feared I might be the only woman to show up, so I was pleased when four other women joined the circle. Four of us were under 35; the other woman was in her fifties and had grown children. Interestingly, all four of us younger gals were involved in relationships with men. In an environment populated primarily by lesbians, it was a relief to speak to other women involved with men while still knowing that they are capable of connecting intimately and sexually with other women.

I was so excited when I looked at my program and found that a Bi Women's Caucus was scheduled for Thursday afternoon. I couldn't wait to meet other bi women and hear of their experiences at the festival. I was even more excited to find that the Caucus would be facilitated by Robyn Ochs. I had encountered Robyn's name ever since I began identifying as bisexual and

**Michigan continues on page 6**

## Call for Submissions

"A Doorway, A Dawn, A Dusk: Queer Lives in the Theatre" will be an anthology exploring questions like what attracts queer people to the stage, how does queerness affect our art, and do people join the theatre in search of queer community? Submit autobiographical essays by December 31, 1998 to: Robin Bernstein, P.O. Box 18308, Washington, DC 20036, [rmb@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu](mailto:rmb@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu). For more information, visit: <http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~rmb>.

The editor of a Bi-sexual Creative Writing Anthology is looking for pieces exploring bisexual themes, characters, story lines, or issues. Submissions may be in the form of short stories, plays, humor or cartoons, songs or poems. Send to: Sheela Lambert, 720 W. 173 St, Apt 32, New York, NY 10032, 212-928-3558.

**Monthly  
Rountable  
Discussion for  
Girls 14 and  
Over:**

**G.I.R.L.S. (Growing Individuals Reacting to Life's Struggles)** holds a monthly roundtable for girls at Simmons College, 300 The Fenway one Saturday each month at 10:00 a.m. The dates for the fall are: October 24, November 21 and December 19. Call Marie at 617-482-1078 for more information.

## Michigan from page 5


started researching and learning more about bisexuality. How exciting to hear from an out and proud bisexual woman! I planned my work schedule so I would be free to attend.

It was a great gathering with a large turnout (65 women). It was satisfying to be near women with whom I had something important in common, but it was also interesting to hear of our differences: women involved with women and women involved with men; monogamous women and polyamorous women; women in their teens and women in their fifties; women who had identified as bisexual for decades and women who had thought of themselves as straight until they had attended the festival the year before; married women and women who didn't believe in marriage. It was good to feel that we could bond over our similarity, while respecting our differences.

My happiest day as a bisexual at Michigan was the one when I got to meet two well known bisexual women. Not wanting to seem like a groupie, I hadn't been brave enough to introduce myself to Robyn Ochs after the Bi Women's Caucus. Imagine my delight when she and her partner arrived in the DART (Disabled Access Resource Team) area to do their work shift! Luckily, it was not terribly busy there, and Robyn and I had a chance to chat. We discovered that we know a couple of the same people from the Boston area. After sharing our experiences as bisexual women at the festival,

Robyn asked if I would be interested in contributing to this piece. I said yes, and here I am. Later that evening, I ran into Leanne Franson, the Canadian woman who draws the Liliane minicomics. (If you don't know, Liliane is a bisexual, bilingual Canadian character who has lots of hilarious adventures.) My friend had pointed Leanne out to me earlier in the day, so I was happy when I had the chance to say hello to her and tell her how much I enjoy her work. When I mentioned how much my straight friend enjoys reading about Liliane's exploits, Leanne whipped out a copy of #32 Telephone Temptress Part Two for me to give to my friend. (Send for a free catalogue of Leanne's work by writing to: P. O. Box 274 Succ. Place du Parc, Montreal QC H2W 2N8 Canada.) (See Leanne's cartoon on page 4)

Chantel lives in Austin, Texas and Sheryl and Robyn both live in the Boston area.

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival can be reached at: WWTMC, PO Box 22, Walhalla MI 49458, (610) 767-4766, and has a web address at <http://www.michfest.com> 



## Bi Women's Rap Still Around

*By Ellyn Ruthstrom*

I mentioned to someone the other day that I was going to Bi Rap that night. She looked at me quizzically, "What's that, some place where you wrap presents together?" Not quite.


The Bisexual Women's Rap Group meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at the Cambridge Women's Center. Each meeting has a theme that the group can use to focus the discussion on, but often one thing leads to another and the conversation goes "off topic." That's usually when it gets most interesting, too. And there is always an opportunity for anyone who shows up to talk about something in particular they want to discuss. Topics have ranged from "Bi Life in Boston" to "Monogamy/Polygamy" to "Dating Women/Dating Men" to "Lesbian/Bisexual: Does it Matter?" The topics for the following month are selected by those who are present at the first Tuesday of the month.

The Rap Group is a wonderful space to be an unapologetic bi woman, to talk about your

own life experience, to share others' experiences, and to feel a part of a vibrant bisexual community (often something people do not know about at all). "Rappers" also share a lot of practical information such as where the clubs for women are, and what other bi events and organizations exist in the area.

It's also a great place to meet women. (Shh—don't tell everyone, they'll all want to come.) I'm not saying that you'll necessarily meet *the* woman of your dreams, but it's a good bet you'll meet women who will become your friends.

The Rap Group is not officially linked to BBWN, but the BiRap was initiated by founding members of BBWN over ten years ago. Many women who have their first contact with bi community through the Rap then go on to become involved with BBWN or other bi groups. BBWN also holds an introductory meeting every other month at the Women's Center for people to learn about the organization.

The Women's Center is located at 46 Pleasant Street, near the Central Square T on the red line. Call 617-354-8807 to find out the topics for upcoming meetings. 

## Reflections from page 1

up a particular climb, giving up only when my muscles are just too drained from trying or I feel I'm encroaching on other people's chance to try that route up the rock.


I generally consider persistence one of my best assets, although we all know that it can be a detriment too. Some pursuits are just best abandoned, and it's not always easy to tell which ones. I'm hoping my ability to tell the difference, and accept the loss that comes along with letting go when warranted, will improve as I grow older.

## Coming Out

I'm glad I'm queer. I can no longer imagine life any other way. Coming out was without a doubt a "Coming of Age" experience for me. It was the most exciting experience I've ever had. The summer before my 27th birthday, life started moving *much* faster than usual. I found myself hurtling toward some huge, exciting, scary and inescapable unknown. Years later I ran into Susan, a woman who had been an invaluable confidante for me during that incredible summer of self-discovery, listening patiently to my every fear and fascination with same-sex romance and answering my questions about it from her own perspective and experiences. During that anxious summer, I hadn't known how things would turn out with me. I knew I *had* to become intimately involved with another woman, but I was still very afraid of losing my male lover of eight years and I had no idea how to make it happen. Susan and I lost touch before I became involved with my first girlfriend and when I ran into her, I recapped the intervening years briefly and told her I'd had no idea back during all those long talks we'd had if I would ever act on my same-sex desires, but that I was very glad I had. She told me she knew all along how the 'story' would end. In retrospect, I can see why she knew, but nothing seemed clear to me at the time.

## Contentment

For me, coming out was like riding a roller coaster: fast, wild, exciting and scary. It was great fun but you wouldn't want to stay on it 24/7/365. Last September I rode in the Boston —> New York AIDS Ride, and life since the 'coming out period' has ended compares well to training for and completing the ride. It's been challenging, fun, sometimes exciting, with lots of hills to climb and speed back down, and overall a big adventure. As I watch the sun drop below the trees across Walden Pond with a brilliant orange and yellow glow, I'm recalling many of the beautiful sunsets and sunrises I've experienced through my life, from Jamaica, Aruba, the White Mountains, Puerto Rico, Jamaica Pond, the

Arnold Arboretum, my back porch, Herring Cove beach, Keke beach on Kauai, a sunrise more spectacular than I would ever have dreamed from the top of the Haleakala volcano on Maui, and many others. I like to think that, in part, the quality of one's life can be measured by the beauty of the sunrises and sunsets one has enjoyed along the way. And as the orange and yellow glow fades across the pond just five hours shy of my 33rd birthday, I'm happy to have taken in one more. 

## Poetry by Liz Phillips

### Airport Dreams

hair slips silently  
through rapt fingers  
skin slides (warm) slowly  
under exultant hands  
mouth worships  
eyes seek  
whispers (hot) urgent  
clichés so  
beautifully true

### Bottled Lust

I try not to stare  
As her long, lovely fingers  
Absently fuck glass

Slowly, up and down  
Beer bottle between her legs  
Blue-green eyes on me

### Night Driving

In this dark, closed space  
I am betraying myself  
It pours off of me

She must be able  
To feel eyes fingers mouth tongue  
On beautiful neck

## Pro-Choice Candidates Need Your Help!

The *BiWomen* staff and Mass NARAL (Mass. chapter of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League) urge you to get involved in working for choice this election season. Abortion rights will be a HOTLY contested issue in congress next year and if pro-choice forces are unable to muster a strong showing in this fall's elections, a woman's right to choose an abortion will continue to dangle precariously by a thread... or worse.

*Here's what you can do to protect reproductive health:* Volunteer with Mass NARAL in activities to support pro-choice candidates. If you are in Metro Boston, Mass NARAL needs your help with evening voter ID and get out the vote phonebanks. You can bring a friend, enjoy snacks and meet great pro-choice people. If you live elsewhere, you can contact Mass. NARAL to find out how you can help pro-choice candidates in your area or for info on how to contact the NARAL affiliate in your state.

To volunteer or for other info please call Mara Sands at Mass NARAL at (617) 556-8800 or send her email at [choice@massnara.org](mailto:choice@massnara.org). Donations to support the group's work can be mailed to Mass NARAL, Statler Building, 20 Park Plaza, Suite 1129, Boston, MA 02116. More information at [www.massnara.org](http://www.massnara.org).

## Hanarchy Now Productions Wants You

Hanarchy Now Productions, a local small business which promotes and produces, cutting-edge cultural, social, and benefit events of interest especially to queer women in the Boston area, is currently seeking interns and volunteers to work in the following areas:

- \* Sales/Marketing
- \* Press/Promotion:
- \* Web/Internet
- \* Small Business Management
- \* Editing/Writing/Research
- \* Event Production
- \* Community Outreach
- \* Graphics/Set Design

For more information on Hanarchy Now internships and volunteer opportunities write to Eve C. Alpern at: <eveeveeve@hotmail.com> with "HNP Internships" as the subject line or: 92 Bay State Ave. #3, Somerville, MA 02144-2135, "attn: HNP Fall Internships."

Hanarchy Now is also requesting donations to help fund Hannah's List, a free email list of events of interest especially to

Hanarchy continues on next page



## Movie Reviews

### *All the Rage?* Let's Hope Not.

Reviewed by Linda Blair

Before I start this review, I should tell you that I can't think of any way to review *All the Rage* without revealing the "full monty," plot outcome and all, so if you're someone who likes to stay in suspense about such things before viewing, then you should skip this review until after you've seen it.

Once I read that *All the Rage* was a movie set in Boston and is about the gay male scene here, even an "I'll wait for the video" type like me knew I'd want to see it right away. First, I am admittedly not too up on gay male culture and was looking forward to such a rare opportunity to see it portrayed on the big screen. The other reason is that I secretly love to see and read fiction that is set in my hometown. I love recognizing the scenery and watching for the subtleties that only the locals will get.

According to Webster's dictionary, the phrase "all the rage" means "a fad pursued with intense enthusiasm." In this case, I think that "fad" would refer to the stereotypical behavior of gay male cruising and one-night stand sex.

*All the Rage's* main character, Chris, is young, rich, sexy, and extremely sought after by seemingly half the queer men in Boston, none of whom he is interested in. Chris' philosophy is that sex with hot guys is something that you should have all the time, but only once with any particular guy. After having sex, each of these guys invariably states what a great time he's had and suggests exchanging phone numbers. Each time, Chris responds with a monotone answer to the effect of "Yeah, me too. That'd be great." He then stores these numbers in a black index card box, throwing one old one out for each new one acquired. But Chris has absolutely no intention of ever calling any of these guys or returning their endless stream of phone messages for him. "If you call twice and don't get a response, you drop it" he says, exacerbated at the guys who continue to call him long after he has completely forgotten about them. Similarly, when his co-worker Larry gets a dozen roses delivered to his office from a guy after just one date, Chris warns "Don't call him. He's got to be psycho."

From the beginning it's obvious that, despite all the hot sex that Chris is getting, he's unhappy. It seems that not only is the sex itself void of emotion, but that it pretty much has a numbing affect and fuels his cynicism and his egotistical view of himself.

Chris recognizes the need for something to

change when he states to his friend "God, I need a boyfriend." Shortly thereafter, he gets his wish. A longtime couple, Tom and Dave, invite him to a dinner party where he meets their downstairs neighbor Stuart. Stuart is about as far from the cruising scene as a gay man can get. He doesn't have a high-powered job, doesn't work out at a gym, is shy, and consistently wears striped pajamas to bed. He's not hip or studly and that's exactly what makes it possible for Chris to be intrigued by him.

Despite a clear attraction, Stuart is reluctant to get involved at first, which Chris learns from Tom and Dave is because he was devastated by his last boyfriend, who "cheated on him" for years. After the second time they meet, Chris excitedly reports to Larry that "He said he'd call this morning" and explains that he's glad they haven't been sexual yet because "Sex can ruin things sometimes and this has potential."

During a brief honeymoon period, things actually look like they might work out. Chris is thrilled at a corny poem that Stuart wrote and sent along with a dozen red roses, is endeared by the fact that Stuart snores softly "like a little kid," and tells a friend "He's so sweet. He makes me happy." To celebrate their two month anniversary, Chris gives Stuart keys to his Back Bay apartment.

So, can the quintessential rich, high-powered, attitude-laden gay man successfully step off the self-alienating sex treadmill? I imagine so, but you won't see it happen in *All the Rage*. The plot follows a relatively predictable line with Chris resisting the temptation for the easy and anonymous sex that is constantly available to him with increasing difficulty and resentment as time passes. It never even occurs to him to be honest about these feelings with Stuart, who is disappointed with Chris' sharp decrease in sexual desire for him but equally as unwilling to initiate a discussion about their growing problems and alienation from each other.

Ultimately, with no communication going on between he and Stuart, Chris slides off the "fidelity wagon" in an encounter that is just too easy and tempting to pass up. Unfortunately for him, this is witnessed by Tom and Dave, who immediately tell Stuart about it. In an ironic and ultimately sad turn of events, Stuart refuses to answer or return Chris' increasingly distraught and grief-stricken phone calls.

Several friends have labeled the movie as 'reactionary' because of the negative light in which non-monogamy is portrayed, claiming that it's another movie that could fuel the fire of the radical right. Well, it's true that sex, and in particular, sex outside of a monogamous relationship, is not portrayed in an attractive way in this movie. But I'm not sure the sex that is portrayed negatively here should be either glossed over or shown in a positive light. Basically, Chris is using sex as a method to keep himself cut off from his real feelings and masking a deeper unhappiness inside him. I think most of us know that's not

what sex outside of monogamy is usually about. Lots of people work damn hard at communicating and being honest with themselves and others in order to make polyamorous and polyfidelitous relationships, sexual friendships and/or casual sex a healthy, enjoyable and positive aspect of their lives. So, in that light, yes it's disappointing to see a movie that's seemingly so negative about sex outside of monogamy and yes, I'd rather see a film that reflected the many healthy and thriving realities that we know exist. But that's not to say that the phenomenon of using sex in self-destructive ways shouldn't be addressed in a movie for fear the radical right will use it as that much more evidence that queers are "immoral." Basically, if sex is making you depressed instead of happy, that's not a good thing and I'd rather see it discussed than swept under the rug for "political" reasons.

Interestingly enough, in *All the Rage* monogamy isn't portrayed as all that attractive of an option either. Tom and Dave are having their own problems sexually and in general as a couple. Tom thinks having a "more open relationship" would

help, which to Dave means that "Tom wants to fuck around." Still, Tom's desire for them both to be sexual with other guys, either as a couple or individually, is neither portrayed as the cause nor the solution to their problems.

The only two female characters, Tom and Dave's therapist and Chris' best friend, a straight woman who's having her own share of difficulties finding Mr. Right, have the best and funniest lines. It's not likely that *All the Rage* will win any awards for best acting, but with every scene jam-packed with men filmed on location here in Boston at the Metropolitan Health Club, the Ramrod, Club Cafe, along the esplanade, outside the Boston Public Library and on streets around the Back Bay and South End, you're bound to recognize someone that you know who is in it as an "extra," so watch closely.

\*\*\*\*\*

*All the Rage* is playing at the Kendall Square Cinema in Cambridge. For times and location call (617) 494-9800.

## The Opposite of Sex

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

*The Opposite of Sex* is a comedy of sorts, yet beneath the laughs rests a mocking cynicism and adroit social commentary. DeDee Truitt (Christina Ricci) is a straight teenager who knows how to get what she needs when she needs it and all the other characters revolve around the havoc that her behavior creates. Running away from home to live with her gay half-brother Bill (Martin Donovan), DeDee immediately makes herself at home by seducing her brother's boyfriend Matt (Ivan Sergei). Poor sweet Matt is a bit naive; he falls in love with DeDee and when she announces that she is pregnant with his baby he becomes a devoted papa-to-be. (I say Matt is bisexual, but DeDee comments "Please, I went to a bar mitzvah once. That doesn't make me Jewish.") The two decide to steal a large sum of money from Bill (and a very personal memento of Bill's) and head to Los Angeles to have their baby.

Meanwhile, Bill is being accused of sexual harassment by a former gay male student Jason

(Johnny Galecki) who happens to be Matt's other boyfriend on the side. Jason won't drop the suit until he is reunited with Matt, which leads Bill to take off for L.A. in pursuit of the lovely couple. Accompanying him is Lucia (Lisa Kudrow), the sister of Bill's former longtime partner who died of AIDS, who is still very heavily involved in Bill's life. Lucia has had DeDee pegged from the second she appeared at the door, and she is the first one to assert that DeDee's pregnancy is too far along to be Matt's. Lucia tries to get Bill angry at what DeDee does to his life, but his calm is almost impenetrable.

I won't spoil the movie by revealing more of the plot at this point. Suffice it to say there are twists and turns that pull you to a closure that amazingly has some elements of a happy ending. The acting is superb, my favorites being Lisa Kudrow and the seemingly unflappable Martin Donovan. Christina Ricci does an amazing job at being a very unlikeable character, yet you can't take your eyes off her.

I found the humor of *The Opposite of Sex* extremely funny and loved that the majority of main characters are queer. DeDee's biting narrative has some very homophobic parts to it, but ironically she's the one spending so much time with and is fairly dependent on so many of them. She has a very warped vision of the world, but her will to survive is admirable. You know she is in pain about something, but don't hold your breath waiting for her to tell you what it is. And if you did, she would turn on you, as she does the camera in the very last scene to tell you to just go away and leave her alone. ▽

## Hanarchy *continued*

women in the Greater Boston queer community. If you are a subscriber to Hannah's List, please consider helping to subsidize the costs involved with producing that list by making a voluntary donation of \$15, \$25, \$50 or whatever you can afford. Make your check payable to Hannah Doress, write "Hannah's List" in the note section and mail to: Hannah Doress, Hanarchy Now Productions, 39 Gray Cliff Rd., Newton, MA 02159. If you are not currently on the list, you can subscribe by sending email to: [majordomo@cybercom.net](mailto:majordomo@cybercom.net) with the words "subscribe hannahs-list" (without the quotes) as the body of the message.

You can also support this valuable resource by advertising your service, business, or organization as a monthly sponsor of Hannah's List. The cost is \$400 (top billing, 5 lines, 6 placements per month). For advertising info, write to: [hdoress@cybercom.net](mailto:hdoress@cybercom.net).

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BOSTON NOVEMBER 6-8, 1998

## New 24-Hour Helpline For GLBT Youth

On August 11, The Trevor Project launched The Trevor Helpline, the first round-the-clock national toll-free suicide hotline for gay, lesbian, bi, trans and questioning youth. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Teens with nowhere to turn can call 800-850-8078, where they can talk to trained counselors, find local resources and take important steps on their way to becoming healthy adults. All calls are free and confidential. For more information about the Trevor Project, visit its web site: [www.trevorproject.com](http://www.trevorproject.com).

# Bifemmer's First Bi Camp

By Wendy Curry

*Dear mom,*

*Camp is fun. I'm making new friends.  
Please send money.*

Bi Camp (held this year near Northhampton) was one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had. With my other bi first this year (IBC5), it cemented my belief in a bisexual utopia.


Unlike IBC5, camp was extremely laid back; we'd begin a trip at 9 am, but not actually move until after noon. This lack of structure enabled spontaneous conversations with a very diverse group - musicians chatted with consultants, students with linemen, computer geeks with actors. Bi/bi, bi/straight, bi/gay couples shared "how we met" stories and discussed their relationships. Partnered people traded experiences with singles; polys hung out with monogamists. Bi theorists could speak to bi writers who could speak to bi media freaks, who could talk to bi non-politicos. They shared everything — food, tents, stories, fires, granola, coffee, their lives.

The singalong (led by a transgendered woman and a bi curious man) included show tunes, Indigo Girls songs, and campfire staples. The potluck had everything from vegetarian casseroles to lamb chili to Nestle's Crunch (political correctness be damned).

People seemed completely respectful of everyone's self identifications and beliefs. This level of acceptance made it surprisingly easy for me to lower my purity score by going "the full

monty" at Cummington's nudist beach. How could I feel awkward around people who politely listened to my definition of a firmware engineer?

It was wonderful! I've heard that public nudity is freeing, but had not believed it. I was wrong. I went three times — each time feeling less nervous, taking less time to disrobe.

But the highlight of my weekend had to be the Saturday night bonfire. Sharing tequila and lemons with the Montreal group...lying between two women (a Canadian and an American) as they cuddled and kept me warm...watching the fire...listening to my partner attempting to play any and all music requests (except for mine for allouette)...watching the different conversations...talking to anyone who came along... Did I mention smores? It doesn't get any better than that. 

*Wendy Curry is the regional editor of the Binet USA newsletter, web mistress of BINET USA's activist pages, a member of several listservs including bifem-l, biact-l, bimw-p, and is a new member of BBWN. She left the computer long enough to go to bi camp.*

## Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads  
diverged in a  
yellow wood...  
and I took both

HATE IS  
**NOT**  
A FAMILY  
VALUE

### Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:  
BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

## At the BBWN Women's Reception at the International Bisexual Conference, we asked those who attended: Who do you wish was bi for at least one night?

### The most famous ones included:

Hillary Clinton	Iman
Demi Moore	Susan Sarandon
Salma Hayek	Emma Thompson
Xena	Maya Angelou
Michelle Pfeiffer	Isabelle Huppert
Marlee Matlin	Alice Walker
Carol Burnett	Whoopi Goldberg
Halle Berry	Sigourney Weaver
Sidney Poitier	Uma Thurman
Helen Hunt	Isabelle Adjani
Oprah	Mary Stuart Masterson

### Then there were the political choices:

Strom Thurmond  
Log Cabin President  
Jeff Epperley (Boston writer and biphobe)

### And then some very personal choices:

my friend Fran	Jeanne's gym coach
my husband	my professor
my girlfriend	the world

## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

### October 27 ♦ Tuesday

**Biversity Halloween Double Feature** at the Brattle. 6:00pm / 7:45pm. *Daughters of Darkness* and *The Hunger*, both featuring female bisexual vampires, will be shown at the Brattle Theater in Harvard Square. Meet in the balcony before either show. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

### October 30 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline.** This issue's theme is "Politics." Are you hopeful or afraid for the political future? What is the radical right doing in your area and what are you doing about it? Clinton, Starr, Lewinsky, Tripp - what's your take on the whole "sexgate" scandal? Share your politics and your visions with us. Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or email text only to [both.lindab@shore.net](mailto:both.lindab@shore.net) and [eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu).

### Oct 30 - Nov 1 ♦ Friday - Sunday

**Wake Up In The Berkshires** on the 3rd annual joint Daughters of Bilitis and Women Outdoors weekend at Stump Sprouts. Hike, relax in the sauna and enjoy the views. All women welcome. \$99 members/ \$109 non-members includes lodging and 6 meals. Reservations and info: Steph at (617) 625-9551 or Nancy at (617) 364-3266.

### November 1 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9pm (see October 4th). First hour's topic: "So-called 'ex-gays'." What does this mean for bisexuals?"

### November 4 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual** 7-9pm (see October 7th)

### November 6 ♦ Friday

**Biversity Games Night.** 7-10pm. Bring a game, a friend, something to munch on, or all three. We'll share fun and games at Linda's in Roslindale. T accessible. Call (617)327-1407 or email [lindab@shore.net](mailto:lindab@shore.net) for directions.



### November 7 ♦ Saturday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch** at noon at Ananda and Amy's in Somerville. This should be a fun warm up to their holiday bash later in the year. Don't miss it! For info and directions, call (617) 776-1008. All women welcome.

**Grand Opening! 5th Anniversary Party.** 5-7pm. Grand Opening is Boston's bi-owned sex boutique. Help Kim Airs celebrate her store's 5th anniversary. Cake and refreshments will be served.

### November 11 ♦ Wednesday

**BBWN Introductory Meeting.** A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9pm (See October 15th)

### November 13 ♦ Friday

**Biversity Celebrates Friday the 13th** at ManRay. 9pm - 2am. Dance the night away with bi folk and other assorted creatures of the night. Wear black. ManRay is at 21 Brookline St. in Cambridge. Cover charge is \$10. No sneakers allowed. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

### November 16 ♦ Monday

**Serve Dinner at the Living Center.** 5-7:30pm. The bi community is volunteering to help serve dinner for members of the Boston Living Center, the HIV/AIDS service organization where the Bi Office is located. The work is easy, the staff is friendly, the cause is good, and your dinner is free. Contact Wesley as soon as you know you're available at (617) 441-3573 or by email at [wlt@shore.net](mailto:wlt@shore.net) to volunteer.

### November 17 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7 - 9 pm (see October 7th)

### November 21 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30am. Join us for brunch at Zaftig's, at 335 Harvard St. in Coolidge Corner, Brookline. Nearest T stop is Coolidge on the C branch of the Green Line. Those interested will go to Grand Opening after we eat.

### November 24 ♦ Tuesday

**BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner.** 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

**BiWomen mailing,** 7-9p.m. at the Bi Office. It's a great way to meet other women in a fun and relaxed atmosphere and it gets BiWomen out to readers across the world. Please join us.

### November 27 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch,** 1pm. Come meet new friends and old for a great vegetarian meal at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. On Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

**Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner** 7-9pm (See October 25th)

### BiWomen Subscription Form

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PHONE (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)

\_\_\_\_ \$30-\$100

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

BBWN

P.O. BOX 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

*Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.*



Please Join your friends in the bi community to serve dinner to members of the Boston Living Center on Monday nights about once a month! It's rewarding work and the food's great! Assuming enough of us volunteer- we'd like to make this a regular community event.

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c/o BBWN  
P.O. Box 639  
Cambridge, MA  
02140**

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## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe', right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe'. For info call (617) 424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call (617) 354-8807.

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk.** 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### 2nd Thursdays:

**Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group.** 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: (617) 499-9612

**Bi Married Women's Support Group.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at (617) 731-9060 for info.

### 3rd Thursdays:

**SpeakOut Meeting.** 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the Bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m. with the theme program starting at 8 p.m. Info: (617) 354-0133.

# CALENDAR

## October 2 ♦ Friday

**New! GLBT and friends dancing and dance lessons** tonight and every Friday night at Shindigs, upstairs at Ryles, 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. Swing, Tango, Ballroom, Two-step - there's a different lesson each week. Beginner lesson 9 - 10 pm, general dancing 10 pm - 1 am. Admission is \$10 before 10 pm, \$7 after. Info: (617) 876-9330.

## October 4 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. Our topic for the first hour will be "How does being bisexual affect your relationships with people of another sex/gender." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space.

## October 7 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call (617) 424-9595 for info.

## October 10 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Hike in the Blue Hills,** 1:00 p.m. We'll be car-pooling to the Blue Hills. Meet at the bi office at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. Bring good shoes, snacks, and water.



## October 14 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site, fund raising, etc. All bi community members and allies are welcome to attend.

## October 17 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch,** 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line. The number at Doyle's is (617) 524-2345.

**Biversity Walk in the Arboretum,** 1:00 p.m. Celebrate Autumn by taking a walk in the Arboretum in Jamaica Plain. Celebrants will leave from Doyle's immediately following brunch.

**Paonia's Birthday Party,** 8:30 p.m. Celebrate Paonia's birthday with fruity blender drinks and Kimba, the itty-bitty kitty. Feel free to bring snacks and drinks. Email party@home.welcomehome.org for directions.



## October 18 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Bike Ride** on the Arlington Bike Trail. Meet at 12:15pm in front of the Bertucci's at Alewife Station on the Red Line. Call (617) 527-1442 or email arthurc@mediaone.net for more information.



## October 20 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual** 7-9pm (see October 7th)

## October 21 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexuality for Bi-Curious Women.** 7:30-9:30pm. Part of the "Sex and the Single Woman" workshop series at Grand Opening. Kim Airs will teach you ways to fulfill your dreams and fantasies. \$20. Call (617) 731-2626 to register.

## October 24 ♦ Saturday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch,** 11:30 am at Debbie's new place in East Boston. Bring a potluck dish or beverage to share with lots of other really fun women. Call (617) 561-8981 for directions and info. T accessible. We'll be sharing the house with 3 kitties, so remember your allergy medicine if necessary. All women welcome.



**Blading Bis.** Enjoy a few hours of roller blading on the Esplanade with Biversity Boston. 12:30pm. Meet in front of the Hatch Shell. Nearest T stop is Charles on the Red Line.

**Pure Dance Fever!** Where women meet women; a dance for single women and friends. 8pm - 1am at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 323 Washington St., Brighton Center. \$10 cover, smoke free, cash bar. Techo, Motown, Swing, Disco and Latin. Info: (617) 628-2606 or djdee@quik.com.

## October 25 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1 pm at the Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth St in Boston, about 1/2 block from Hazel's Cafe on the other side of the street. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

## October 25 ♦ Sunday

**Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner,** 7 - 9 p.m. Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call (617) 424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.



**CALENDAR** continues on page 11

## Politics

### The Personal and the Political

By Amy Wyeth

*Wanted: Outspoken bi or gay woman comfortable with own sexuality to work in politics. Be yourself and combat well organized, well funded right-wing anti-gay rhetoric in political mainstream. Must be willing to have self-identity tested every day, and act on your desire for gay and bi identities to be the norm, in a world where the opposite is true. If you're committed to this kind of work, have we got a job for you!*

In Massachusetts, it has been said that we live in a "bubble" of liberal attitudes toward GLBT identities. Relative to the rest of our country, we are probably in a pretty safe place. But how safe is it? Are you able to be "out" in the same way a person dating/married to, or romantically interested only in those of the opposite sex can be? Does the concept of a national "Going In Day," where everyone has to remove all physical hints of opposite sex partnerships, intrigue you? (I first read about this idea in an article by writer E.J. Graff in *The Boston Globe* on a recent national "Coming Out Day.") Even in our "liberal" state, those of us not in a "traditional" monogamous marriage are not yet at a point where we can always feel equal or safe to be ourselves — legally, publicly, or privately.

Like it or not, our personal lives are political — because some people and groups don't want us to have the same rights they do. Others are less proactive but just don't want to change the world from the way they've always known it. Both groups are supported by money and activism spent to maintain the status quo in politics and the media.

The following experiences — both pluses and minuses — come from my political work and activism as a bisexual woman. I think they drive home my concern that even in the places where laws affecting

**Personal** continues on page 8



Evelyn Mantilla at the Fifth International Bisexual Conference in April.

### Bisexual Legislator Wins Reelection in Connecticut

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

For those of us lucky enough to have been at the keynote by Rep. Evelyn Mantilla (D-Hartford, CT) at the International Bisexual Conference in April, you will be pleased that she was able to tromp over her gay-bating opponent Rev. Gabriel Jose Carrera by a 7-1 margin. Carrera attempted to make Mantilla's sexuality a key issue in the race by appealing to Latino voters to view her bisexuality as contradictory to their values.

Mantilla chose to ignore Carrera's negative advertising and focused on the issues.

*INNewsweekly* quoted Mantilla as saying "I am proud because of what it says about the community I represent. They (the voters) know the difference between honest campaigning on the issues that affect their lives and someone who only sees things through a single lens."

Queer organizations in Connecticut were happy about the huge majority Mantilla won and several spoke out about the positive signs her win indicated. *INNewsweekly* quoted Richard Agostinho, board member of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition, as saying "I think this was a major statement for anyone coming out and especially for gay youth. What Evelyn Mantilla has done for queer youth in setting an example has been phenomenal. She's a great role model and a true hero."

Let's hope Mantilla has a long career in politics and that we will see her making it to higher public office. Viva Mantilla!

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Bi Response to the Rx-Gay Ads.....4

Health Care Bill of Rights.....5

Reviewing the Political Scene ...5

BiNet North East Region.....6

Poetry.....7, 9

B-Girls Talk Polyamory.....10

Calendar.....11,12

### Volunteers of the Month

Jeanne  
Debbie Block-  
Schwenk  
Annie Goglia  
Linda Blair  
Lynn Levine  
Ellen Cullen  
Kelly  
Maria  
Linda Dyndiuk  
Robyn Ochs



*And many more  
wonderful  
women! You  
know who you  
are! Thank you,  
thank you, thank  
you!*

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published  
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this  
issue of BiWomen:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on  
recycled paper

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

### BBWN: To The Next 15 Years

This has been the 15th anniversary year of BBWN — and we certainly had some fun times acknowledging that over the course of the year. We are ringing out the anniversary year with our Third Annual Holiday Party at Ananda and Amy's, so look on page 3 and the calendar for more details. If you've been at the party over the last two years, you know it is *not* to be missed.

This is the first issue that I will be editing on my own. BBWN owes a great deal to Linda Blair for her co-editing and writing (as well as all the other stuff she does for the Boston bi community) for *BiWomen* over the years. Look for Linda to still appear in our pages occasionally as she will continue to be a contributor (see page 6).

If you are in the Boston area and you are interested in helping create the newsletter, please contact me (926-8737) and let me know. There are opportunities to write, edit, proof-read, layout, and work on advertising.

The United States claims to be the strongest democracy in the world, but amazingly few of our citizens actually go out and flex their electoral muscle when given the chance. I know that the choice of candidates is often dismal, but I try to keep in mind that too many people struggled for my right to walk into a voting booth to take it for granted. This issue's theme is Politics and we've got a range of information to share with you about the current political situation.

Amy Wyeth gives us a very personal perspective on how she manages to balance being bi in a supposedly "liberal" political environment. See a national bi response to the right-wing assault on queer people in the national press on page 4. Amatul Hannan shares her political poetry with us on page 7 and discusses polyamory on page 10. We have good reelection news for a bi New England politician (see page 1), and I do some musing on the general political scene in the news lately on page 5.

Check out the themes for the next few issues, we'd love to hear from you about any or all of them!

Ellyn Ruthstrom

### Next in *Bi Women*:

The BiWomen theme for Feb/Mar is:

#### The Cyber Issue

How has the cyber world affected your life? Have you found bi community online? Have you dated online? What do you observe about the way people communicate online? Has the technology ever caused problems? Share your favorite email stories.

DEADLINE: January 6, 1999

### Future Issues in 1999

April/May: Heartache & Healing

June/July: Children

August/September: Seduction



### Please Submit to *Bi Women*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to [eruthstr@lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@lesley.edu).

*If you do not want your name published,  
please tell us.*

All articles and art appearing in  
this newsletter are copyrighted  
by the authors and artists.

Dear Editor,

It was wonderful to discover — via Ellyn Ruthstrom's piece in your last issue — that Bi Women's Rap at the Women's Center "is still around."

I'm especially heartened to learn this, because I started the group ten years ago, after having experienced some hostile vibes at the "Lesbian Rap" group there. After attending a monthly BBWN intro session at the Women's Center, I was surprised to find that no regularly-meeting, open drop-in group existed for bi women in the Boston area. I spoke with Judy Norris at the Center and filled out the necessary forms. After some debate (apparently), the Women's Center board granted us a space for weekly meetings, and I went on to facilitate the group for about two and half years before burning out and handing the reigns over to another facilitator.

One word of correction — although I've participated in some BBWN events in the past, and have always been extremely gratified by its existence, I am not in fact "a founding member of BBWN," as the article states.

Just thought I'd set the record bi!

Karen Friedland

aka Karen F. of *Bi Girl World*

P.S. It was also a pleasant surprise to see the article on Michigan by my pal down in Austin, Chantel Guidry! ▼



## Shop Online and Support the Bisexual Resource Center

Wondering what to get your sweetie, mom, or aunt Gladys this holiday season? You can avoid the crowds by shopping online and support the educational work of the Bisexual Resource Center this year.

The Bisexual Resource Center, in its continuing drive to earn a few dollars to pay the rent, has opened the Bisexual Music Store. The store features music by bisexual artists from Bessie Smith to Tom Robinson, but you can choose from any of thousands of other CDs there as well. The Music Store now joins the Bisexual Video Store and the Bisexual Book Store as new additions to the BRC web site. Each store provides easy access to merchandise by bisexual authors or artists and featuring bisexual themes, but also thousands of other selections from all categories. And every purchase helps support the educational projects of the BRC.

The music store is located at <http://www.biresource.org/musicstore>. The Bisexual Book Store is located at <http://www.biresource.org/bookstore> and the Bisexual Video Store, which features sales and rentals, is located at <http://www.biresource.org/videostore>.

In addition to books, videos, and music, the BRC web site merchandise section has rainbow double triangle "Bisexual Pride" t-shirts and tank tops, two designs of bi bumper stickers, and loads of bi and queer buttons which also make great gifts and stocking stuffers. The Bisexual Resource Center web site address is: <http://www.biresource.org>. ▼



BBWN is holding its Third Annual Holiday Party on *Saturday, December 12*. Party time is 8:00 and the party place is Ananda and Amy's in Somerville. Open mic entertainment begins at 9:00 with appearances by storyteller **Annie Goglia**, and performance artists **Amatul Hannan** and **Anoosh Jorjorian**. Then there will be dancing until.....



Cocktail attire encouraged.

Call 776-1008 for directions.

## Bisexual People of Color Potlucks

Sunday, December 27th

and

Sunday, January 24th

NOTE NEW TIME:

5-7 p.m.

Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF  
THE HARVARD INSTITUTE

## Queer Activisms for a New Millennium:

Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Politics in California. Call for conference papers, panels, and participation. The conference is presented by The Center for Sex Research and LesBiGay Studies at California State University, Northridge and will be held at the Airtel Plaza Hotel Van Nuys, California on August 6-9, 1999. Proposals for papers or panels should be sent by February 1, 1999 to: Center for Sex Research, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8318.

## A Bisexual Response to the Christian Right-Wing

*The following text was written by national bi leaders as a response to the right-wing Christian Ex-Gay ads run in national newspapers across the country.*

**"IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE, YOU'LL TELL THEM THE TRUTH."**

The Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, and the American Family Association used this slogan in recently published anti-gay ads claiming to have cured homosexuals of their behavior. The ensuing debates on morality, genetics or unlearning behavior all miss an important point — we have the right to love whomever we choose. The truth is human sexuality is far more rich and multifaceted than we're taught to believe. The truth is that neither science, nor politics, nor religion can yet define the genesis of sexual orientation. Most likely each of us is a complex mix of nature and nurture. The truth is — **many people are bisexual.**

Bisexual people have the capacity for emotional, romantic, loving and/or physical attraction to more than one gender. Some of these so-called ex-gays are undoubtedly bisexual. Bisexuals can choose to be open to the full range of possibilities, but our bisexuality is the potential, not the requirement, for involvement with more than one gender. Some bisexual people choose to be in committed monogamous relationships; some choose other forms of relationships and commitments. Heterosexual and homosexual people also make these choices.


Bisexuals come from all cultures, all religious and spiritual beliefs, all sizes and abilities, all social strata and walks of life. Some of us are just like you. Some of us are nothing like you. But we are bound together by one important factor: we believe in the freedom to love whom we choose. The truth is — **love is about honor and respect for yourself and others.**

The truth is these ads sow hatred and intolerance. These organizations are seeking to define sexuality, gender, and family solely in their own image. It is an offense to the human spirit for any group to impose their beliefs as the one true way and to tell people to reject and hate themselves and each other because they do not fit a certain mold. That is not love. Love, between people who care for each other regardless of the genders involved, is an important family value that strengthens our society and enriches all our lives. Love is an essential part of life and a celebration of the human spirit. The truth is that

the families we create, in whatever form, are precious and entitled to respect and to equal protection under the law.


The truth is — **love makes a family.**

As human beings we are born with the right and ability to love, to change and to choose as we grow. We must all have the option to choose to get married or not. We must all have the right to have and to raise children or not. All our relationships and families must be equally valued. We must have the right to walk down the street holding hands without the threat of violence. We must have the right to live, to work and love without fear of discrimination of any sort. We must have the right to make our own moral and ethical decisions based on our own personal integrity.

**THE TRUTH IS ALL PEOPLE — BISEXUAL, LESBIAN, GAY, TRANSGENDER, HETEROSEXUAL — DESERVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE WHOM WE CHOOSE.** 

## Camp Sister Spirit Seeks Donations

Camp Sister Spirit is a feminist education, cultural and retreat center in Overt, Mississippi that has been filling many needs in its community for five years now. Established by Brenda and Wanda Henson, Camp Sister Spirit made national headlines when their efforts in their community were vilified and openly attacked by homophobic local people. Through their bravery and perseverance, Sister Spirit continues to grow and now has a food pantry/clothes closet for nearly 100 local families; a resource and book library used by local students and by lifelong learners; and rental cabins and RV spaces for visitors on the 120 acre camp.

Sister Spirit is organizing their yearly trip to Isla Mujeres (Island of Women) in Mexico, December 26-January 2. A group of women go together and volunteer to help Dr. Greta Shorey at the Red Cross Outpost/Medical and Community Center and they are looking for others to join them or to make donations that they can bring with them. Donations may include: clothing and shoes appropriate to a tropical island climate, small toys and stuffed animals for children, medical supplies, craft supplies, and money. For more information or to send donations: Sister Spirit Incorporated, P.O. Box 12, Overt, MS 39464, 601-344-1411, Sisterspir@aol.com. 

# Reviewing the Political Scene

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

This has been quite the year of news coming out of Washington. Surprises galore — both good and bad. Most recently we were happy to see the voluntary departure of The Newt from his powerful Speaker of the House position. We no longer have to see that pudgy little face at news conferences and peeking out from behind the President at the State of the Union addresses.

Of course the mid-term elections were what precipitated The Newt's departure. After month upon month of Ken Starr's McCarthyish inquisition running on every front page and the lead story of every evening newscast, the Americans who bothered to go to the polls made an obvious

statement of disapproval of the Beltway's obsession with Slick Willy's willy. The drumbeat behind the impeachment proceedings has diminished tremendously since the votes were counted, and now with the Paula Jones's case settled for a cash award the steam has run out of the Republican quest to invalidate the 1996 presidential election. Bill Clinton is the president, randy little fellow that he is.

From a queer perspective, we've watched from the sidelines as the President's sex life became fodder for political humiliation. Is it a new

*Reviewing continues on page 7*

**The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Care Consumer's Bill of Rights was developed by a working group of more than sixty individuals from across Massachusetts and was released earlier this year.**

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people of all ages have the right to full and equal access to all health care services, in a supportive environment, where it is safe for them and for their families to be out to their providers if they choose to do so. They have the right to health care services that are comprehensive, medically appropriate and culturally competent. In order to ensure their access to quality health care, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people of all ages have the right:

- (1) to confidentiality of their medical records, including confidentiality about their sexual orientation and gender identity;
- (2) to have their families recognized, acknowledged and respected by all health care providers;
- (3) to be treated in a health care environment that uses culturally appropriate language, including culturally appropriate intake and other written forms;
- (4) to have case management and treatment plans that include and address sexual orientation and gender identity where it is a necessary and appropriate issue in client care;
- (5) to be included and to have their needs addressed in prevention and other public health programs;
- (6) if a minor, to safe and confidential medical treatment, to be informed of their legal rights, and to be advised of the possibility and possible consequences of mandated reporting.

The GLBT Health Access Project is distributing a variety of materials to support the concerns of the Bill of Rights. Their "Deserves the Same Care" posters have been distributed to hospitals, community centers, universities, mental health centers, family planning clinics, police departments, and schools.

Posters are available for free from: The GLBT Health Access Project, JRI Health, 100 Boylston St, Suite 860, Boston, MA 02116, 617-988-2605, [access@glbthealth.org](mailto:access@glbthealth.org).

## Queer Anti-Capitalist Resistance: International Perspectives

*Socialist Review* is calling for papers for the above topic. Papers may be in the form of articles, activist communique, review essays, etc. Topics could include: queer workers and labor organizing, queer identity politics and class struggle, queer youth issues, combating biphobia and transphobia, issues pertaining to sex industry workers and more. Deadline for submissions is February 25, 1999. Contact: *Socialist Review*, 1095 Market St, Suite 618, San Francisco, CA 94103, 415-255-2296.

## Bi Women and Safer Sex Survey

As part of a study on HIV/AIDS risk for women who have sex with women, doctoral student Barb Nicely is asking bisexual women to complete an anonymous questionnaire. You must be 18 or older, have had at least one sexual relationship with a man and one sexual relationship with a woman from 1978 to the present, and be willing to answer personal and explicit questions about your sexual experiences.

Contact Barb at Study, P.O. Box 670594, Northfield, OH 44067-0594, [nicelystudy@mindspring.com](mailto:nicelystudy@mindspring.com)

## North East Regional Retreat Planned for BiNet USA

By Linda Blair

On October 24, BiNet USA members from Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont met to discuss current and potential projects for the organization's North East Region. The meeting was in part planned for the regional BiNet USA representatives, Sue Corcoran and Kim Ward, to gather ideas and feedback to take to the BiNet leadership retreat and training held in early November.

BiNet USA is a national organization working for the equal rights and liberation of bisexuals and to eradicate all forms of oppression by furthering the development of bisexual community and visibility. Ongoing national campaigns include making bis visible in the media; building bisexual community through organizing and outreach projects including a Rural Initiative and a Youth Initiative; and education geared toward eradicating stereotypes and building bridges between people of all orientations.

One of the most exciting decisions made at the regional meeting was to organize a North East Regional Retreat for the spring of 99 which would include workshops to help members learn much needed organizing and fundraising skills, the history of the bi movement, political and educational strategies and provide plenty of opportunities to share ideas and schmooze. Southern New Hampshire was discussed as a good central location and April 10th or 17th proposed as possible dates.

Much of the meeting was devoted to discussing what local members here in the North East felt BiNet USA's resources as a national group could offer its members here in our region. The most prominent idea that emerged from this discussion was the need to have a staffed 1-800 hotline and referral line to give out to the many people that contact both regional representatives and individual BiNet members who are sometimes the only prominent bi folk in their local community. This discussion made clear the need for more national assistance to be brought into rural communities in our region, where very few resources currently exist for people who are bi or bi-questioning.

We also discussed ways to better publicize the resources that currently do exist. One idea was to get the home phone numbers of willing BiNet state and regional representatives listed in the yellow pages of all the phone books in their state as well as into regional and national gay/les/trans publications like "The Pink Pages," the "Gay Yellow Pages" and queer travel directories. This was another area that national resources could be very helpful in accomplishing.

The meeting also raised the following issues as local concerns to send our regional representatives to address as such at their national retreat:

- \* a suggestion to change the membership fee from the current policy of "\$1 for each \$1,000 of your annual income" to "\$20 — more if you can, less if you can't,"

- \* a request to finish and distribute a pending Rural Initiative resources packet or send a preliminary info packet to help us spark more effective and much needed organizing in rural areas all around our region,

- \* a request for BiNet to increase the frequency and quantity of information about what's happening on the national front to its members, and

- \* a sense that we need to find ways for the regions to communicate better with and feel more connected to each other. One suggestion on how was to create a chat forum on the BiNet web site where members can meet to have "virtual meetings."

A main theme of the day's meeting was that BiNet USA needs to both increase our membership here in the North East and facilitate more communication between members around the region. To do this, members present committed themselves to helping by: contacting new members in our area soon after they join to welcome them and let them know ways they can get active in their community; compiling a list of all the bi groups and resources that currently exist in our region as well as a list of media contacts to help us publicize them more effectively; and calling each other more often to check in with, strategize together and support each other.

Finally, we set a long term goal of "touring" our regional reps around the North East to meet with members in all of the New England states to help aide regional communication, share ideas and inspire more bi community organizing locally.

To request a membership brochure or for more information on the spring North East BiNet Retreat, please contact Kim Ward at [kimw@earth.goddard.edu](mailto:kimw@earth.goddard.edu) or Sue Corcoran at (603) 679-5607.

.....

Check out the "bi-curious" characters on NBC's *Homicide* each Friday at 10:00. Last season Detective Bayliss was questioning his sexuality, now a gorgeous woman detective (sorry, couldn't find her name) reveals she's dated bi men before and that she believes most women are bi-curious.

## Reviewing from page 5


age where straight politicians will have their affairs and indiscretions "outed" to the public just as some queer politicians (and others in different capacities, too) have had their lives unveiled for public scrutiny? And are these right-wing politicians upset that they just aren't getting enough so they want to make sure no one else gets any too? Who can say, but I certainly am not going to volunteer to sleep with Jesse Helms just so he'll get off our case.

Despite all that, we know that queer political clout is still growing. Our bisexual activism on our own behalf and in concert with the greater gay, lesbian, and transgender communities makes a difference. Tammy Baldwin was elected as the first out lesbian in Congress representing Wisconsin, and several out gay representatives were reelected. Amy Wyeth notes in her article beginning on page 1 that Massachusetts had some newly elected out queer candidates, and we are not the only state that had this happen.

Unfortunately, voters in Hawaii and Alaska passed referendums forbidding same sex mar-

riage, and in Ogunquit, Maine (a summer tourist spot for queer New Englanders) voters narrowly defeated the proposed gay rights ordinance. News from around the country suggests that local queer candidates are making inroads slowly and political opinion on queer civil rights is still being fought town by town. I'm sure you've heard this before: It's all part of "The Process." It's frustrating, but it's true.

Now I've been wondering in this whole Lewinsky fiasco why no one has mentioned the most interesting queer slant in this situation. It's obvious to me that phone queen Linda Tripp was obsessed by Monica, and had originally decided to tape her conversations so she could play them back to herself in the middle of the night. She was jealous of Bill's power over Monica and realized that because she didn't smoke cigars she just couldn't compete. It's a sad and tragic love story, soon to become a TV movie. Judith Light will play Linda Tripp and Christina Ricci will play Monica Lewinsky.

But think about it — is it any more absurd than what really happened? 

## Anthology by Children of GLBT Parents Seeking Submissions



Are you the child of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender parent or parents? When did you discover this and how did you feel? What types of problems or challenges has it caused? Poems, paintings, essays, short stories, drawings, songs, journal entries, photographs, and collages reflecting this experience are all acceptable forms of submission — artwork must be camera ready. Send submissions with your name (you can request that only your first name be used), age, state, and a SASE to: Nicole Moss, English Dept, 401 Hall of Languages, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1170, nmoss@syr.edu Deadline is March 1, 1999.

## "They asked me why it was named BOX"

By Amatul Hannan

Please check the box(s) which contain you

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red   | <input type="checkbox"/> White   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Jew     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loose | <input type="checkbox"/> Uptight |

- |   |                             |                              |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Straight               | <input type="checkbox"/> Bi | <input type="checkbox"/> Gay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depressingly Celibate  |                             |                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Hell of a Fine Lay |                             |                              |

...Now, I hear some dudes will stick their one and only dick through a glory hole just to get through to the other side!


Well this Mamma's got a Squeeze Box true, I can be one easy-to-please fox - but honey, I've still got my pride!

Cause I've got a Box up inside, boy- just like the one that pushed you out- this Box can mean joy, pain or pride- but in the end, could be my social clout!

See it's our chick privilege to hide it away- or to share by the road if we choose- but how can it be worth a bit of warm spit If it's mystery and power we lose?

Yes, I've got a Box up inside, girl- just like the one that pushed you out- this Box can mean joy, pain or pride- but in the end, could be our social clout!

So grrls

- keep that box Hot for your pride
- don't let boys place laws, like paws on our ovaries
- remember SHE, holy prostitute, watching us:
- HermAphrodite, Lysistrata,
- the Goddess of life and lust!
- so when it seems from ol' frustration you're gonna bust
- cherish your wimminhood!
- for
- In BOX We Trust! 

## Boston PFLAG Scholarships for High School Students



Scholarship applications are now available from Boston PFLAG for high school seniors who plan on attending college next year and who have been involved with their Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) or Association of Gay and Lesbian Youth (AGLY). The application deadline is February 1, 1999. Contact Shirley Hayden, PFLAG Scholarship Committee Chair, 617-332-5404.

## Personal from page 1

our lives are made, there's a long way for the mainstream to go in gaining understanding and acceptance.

### Plus

In my work in 1996 at a non-partisan, non-profit research organization, we surveyed state legislative candidates across the U.S. on issues of public concern. The two-year-old survey I was revising contained no question asking a candidate's position on same-sex marriage or anti-discrimination laws. The "affirmative action" questions I proposed on race issues were easily accepted into the survey, but not the gay issues questions. It took an unsolicited letter from members of a union in California about the importance of this issue to at least 10% of the voting public, before the question made it on to the survey.

### Minus

In a government job in 1997, I learned that a supervisor wanted me to travel out of town, overnight, on business. While annoyed because I had a board meeting for the Bisexual Resource Center on the night she wanted me to go, I realized this was an opportunity for me to find out more about her attitudes about sexual orientation. I'd already noticed, for example, that she had no photos on her desk, and never mentioned the gender of the partner she so obviously had. So I mentioned the conflict I had with the BRC meeting. She showed no hint of emotion, reaction, or acknowledgment of what I shared, and the ensuing short discussion resulted only in me going on the travel as scheduled.

### Plus

In 1998, I placed a press release photo and announcement of my election to the board of a political organization in the *Somerville Journal*, my local newspaper. I had decided to include my (then-) board membership of the Bisexual Resource Center as part of my background. This was information I'd agonized over publishing, but I finally let my desire to be honest about who I am override my fear of who would see it and what they might think. Happily, the executive director later told me the office got a positive phone call specifically about that press release.

### Minus

In a legislative office I recently worked in, I soon learned that when someone brought in a baby or yet another set of baby pictures, I could expect everyone to stop work to coo over her/him/ them for at least twenty minutes. My officemates

knit sweaters and baby booties for these children of married coworkers, and talked all the time about husbands, wives, and opposite sex dating. Single moms or dads, and same-sex couples with or without kids didn't exist in the conversation around me.

Meanwhile, no one in the office talked about a vigil in memory of Wyoming gay-bashing victim Matthew Shepard, though it was close by and advertised on all our email accounts. Another time, when I was asked to look for a file on gay issues I found nothing within five cabinets full of policy files, I ended up creating the file with materials of my own.

However, other groups were pro-active about expressing their views in our office. A Newton-based organization sends out beautifully printed, regular newsletters to all Massachusetts legislators highlighting tributes to fatherhood and marriage; another group distributed leaflets comparing gay men to pedophiles during this summer's debate on domestic partnerships. I was led to wonder whether I should have told a coworker I'd attended a recent Gay Pride.

My work experiences may not be that different from your own. I don't think anyone would argue how hard it is to maintain a complete, proud identity in environments like these. I've asked myself many times if it would be easier to acknowledge only the straight relationships I've had, and de-emphasize the ones that weren't? Sure it would, if I accepted the majority of the messages I'm getting.

The future of our personal lives in Massachusetts depends on our active role in affecting how we're seen and represented in the media and by politicians. How is our future set up in Massachusetts as we head into 1999?

Here is a sampling of political facts I've gathered which may offer some hints:

- Of the four pro-gay candidates I worked for in 1998, two won, and two lost.
- State Senator Lois Pines, former candidate for attorney general, has a Cape Cod Pride sticker hanging in her office, talks and acts frequently in support of gay issues, and gathered lots of support from the gay community.
- Her opponent and our future attorney general, Tom Reilly, had an openly gay woman as his campaign manager.
- Alice Wolf's State Representative campaign in Cambridge was gay positive and appeared to include lots of bi or gay women in leadership roles.
- The Massachusetts State Legislature will

have two openly gay Representatives in the 1999-2000 session: Liz Malia, who won her special election earlier this year in Jamaica Plain, will continue. Jarrett Barrios, a young Latino attorney who lives with his partner in Cambridge, will begin.

- I sent a postcard to my State Representative, Pat Jehlen, in June as part of an activist effort supporting gay marriage. She later hired me to work as volunteer coordinator for her campaign.
- Governor Cellucci, after vetoing a domestic partnership bill in July, placed a campaign ad in gay/lesbian newspaper *Bay Windows* this year announcing his support of domestic partnerships.
- Matt Amorello, retiring State Senator and former candidate in a 1998 central Massachusetts congressional race, aired ads from his campaign (which he lost) on Boston-area radio station WCRB using the distorted, so-called "Marriage Tax" anti-gay rhetoric. (The "Marriage Tax" is a right-wing propaganda term for an income tax provision that causes some married couples to have to pay about \$1000 more in income taxes. Of course, this ignores the hundreds of tax and insurance breaks received by married couples, which gay couples cannot receive as they cannot marry).
- Brian Golden, a Christian-right supported candidate, recently won election as a State Representative in Brighton.
- Jim Marzilli, a progressive incumbent from Arlington, fended off a challenge this year from another right-wing candidate who had significant support from a Wellesley-based, right-wing PAC with national ties.

Messages get their credibility and their time in the media through the mouths of our public officials. Yet as I've tried to show, at least half the time in my work I saw that it was the messages of negativity, fear, or ignorance had made their way into the policy-making arena. More people in decision-making roles need to hear personal perspectives from us. Be where the decisions are made — work on a campaign, run for office, write a letter to your elected officials, call the speakout section of your local newspaper. The "Personal is Political" statement that came out of the feminist movement so many years ago speaks a lot of truth to us today. ▽



## Halloween in the Castro, 1998

By Vivian Taube



Rainbow flags,  
streets cordoned off,  
crowds up and down hills.

People dancing to reggae music,  
cheering.

Black winged angels,  
dancing penguins,  
human clock,  
RMS Titanic.

Go-go girls,  
rainbow fairies.  
Teddy bear man,  
balloon woman.  
King and Queen of hearts,  
jokers, too.

Dorothys in drag,  
good witch,  
bad witch,  
scarecrow, tin man, cowardly lion.

Saw my friend,  
with a shrunken head.

Ladybugs,  
birds,  
swarm of bees.

Ghouls,  
dragons,  
Death offering a severed head.

Neon people all aglow,  
dancing in a third story window. ▽

## Safe Home Providers Needed

The Network for Battered Lesbians & Bisexual Women is looking for community members to provide 1-5 nights shelter in their homes to lesbians, bisexual, and transgender women and their children who have been battered. The Network provides training, supervision, 24-hour emergency back-up, and a daily stipend. Contact the Network at 617-695-0877.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF  
THE KINSEY INSTITUTE

## Call for Papers

Sexuality & Culture, an interdisciplinary annual, is seeking papers for the 1999 volume on "The Repression of Sexual Expression." Topics could include censorship of sexual materials, control of sexual communication on the Internet, control on public nudity and sex, the criminalization of commercialized sexuality and more. For more information contact Dr. Barry Dank at case@csulb.edu. Four copies of the manuscript should be submitted by January 8, 1999 to the Managing Editor, Dr. Roberto Refinetti, Sexuality & Culture, 504 Lake Colony Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242, refinetti@msn.com

## B-Girls Talk Polyamory: An essay conversation

By Amatul Hannan

Two bi chicks were musing about polyamory one day in August and here is some of what they had to say. So, what do YOU think? Discuss with the rest of the class and report back to me.

A) ...in the final analysis, quality, not just quantity, is my desire. Honesty and passion, intelligence and commitment without so many jealous and growth-retarding chains — this is so attractive.

B) Absolutely, as one of my dear friends always says, absolutely.

A) You know, I feel that to be trained to be a "good girl" by society means to be an over-worked, emotionally devoured, and self-less thing — I will not stand for it.

Some must think when they see a modern girl "What a BAD women — she isn't jumping off a cliff with feeding my emotional needs!!!" I call on the myths of the castrating women, (she who holds her own dick), the bad mother (she who pushes her chicks out to fly!) the whore, and the dark virgin, sister Kali (she who cuts through bullshit! — she's a scary chick!).

B) Definitely scary, but the one I want to share my life with, not that meek woman who tells you what you want to hear until one day you realize you don't know who she is at all...or worse, you

find she is really angry because you don't do it too.

Who is selfless, but one without a self, and if she has no self then who can you love? Is it just yourself in some strange mirror image, or the image of perfect woman: anorexic and dying to meet your every need? I could go on for days on this topic...

A) INTERESTING! On another note, for me a feminine man who loves himself is one of the best lovers you can have, because he has presumably worked on the misogyny internalized within himself. He probably has been subjected to it, and/or to Homophobia and personal attack...and he hopefully loves himself regardless...

...since the hippy days are now days gone past, it's much more suspect again for fellows to be soft and lovely — unless they are babyfaced Leonardo DiCaprio or those three Hanson kiddies! Uggh.


I really like men who love their friends. I saw a sticker that said "Never trust a man who hasn't been assfucked" at the 1998 Bi Conference! Hee hee hee.

B) I love that, it really speaks to something. That old story of the man who is only friends with women makes me wonder, although if he hasn't found the sweet men that are out there, I can understand not wanting to hang out with the \*beer-guzzling misogynist neanderthals that seemed to be representative of the gender for so much of my life...

...I feel tired just at the thought of all the times I'll have to say "Yes, I'm married; yes, he's a man; no, I don't prefer men, yes, I'd have married a woman if she came along first. As a matter of fact if she comes along now I'd still marry her. No, she doesn't have to sleep with either of them too, etc..."

Can you tell I've been through that a bit? I like to call my lovers partner and lover so no one can assume gender, but after a while they ask for names.

*The conversation continues. Make up the rest for yourself.*

\*By the way, nothing against beer-guzzling neanderthals — I guzzle beer myself. 

### Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads  
diverged in a  
yellow wood...  
and I took both

HATE IS  
**NOT**  
A FAMILY  
VALUE

#### Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:  
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

### January 6 ♦ Wednesday

#### BiWomen Submissions

**Deadline.** This issue's theme is "The Cyber Issue." How has the cyber world affected your life? Have you found bi community online? Have you dated online? What do you observe about the way people communicate online? Has the technology ever caused problems? Share your favorite email stories. Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or email text only to [eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu](mailto:eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu).



**Coming Out as Bisexual** 7-9 p.m. (see December 7th)

### January 9 ♦ Saturday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch** at 11:30 a.m. at Annie G's in Arlington. Get warm on a cold afternoon with a bunch of very warm, dare I say "hot" bi women! For info and directions, call 781-646-2379. All women welcome.

### January 13 ♦ Wednesday

**BBWN Introductory Meeting.** A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site, international bi organizing, fund raising, etc. All bi community members welcome to attend.

### January 16 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch**, 11:30. At the ever-popular Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square in Somerville. Nearest T stop is Davis Square on the Red Line.

**Biversity Planning Meeting.** Immediately following the brunch at Johnny D's. Help plan events for the February/March calendar.

### January 17 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Brunch/Matinee**, 11:30 a.m. ish. We'll find a good movie to see (most likely spot is at the Kendall Cinema) and meet at a nearby eatery. Ellyn is organizing this, so call her at 617-926-8737 and let her know you are interested.

### January 18 ♦ Monday

**Serve Dinner at the Living Center.** 5-7:30 p.m. The bi community is volunteering to help serve dinner for members of the Boston Living Center, the HIV/AIDS service organization where the Bi Office is located. The work is easy, the staff is friendly, the cause is good, and your dinner is free. Contact Wesley as soon as you know you're available at 617-441-3573 or by email at [wlt@shore.net](mailto:wlt@shore.net) to volunteer.



### January 19 ♦ Tuesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. (see December 2nd)

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center,** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 354-8807 for topic.

### January 24 ♦ Sunday

**Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner,** 5-7 p.m. Note new time. (See December 27th)

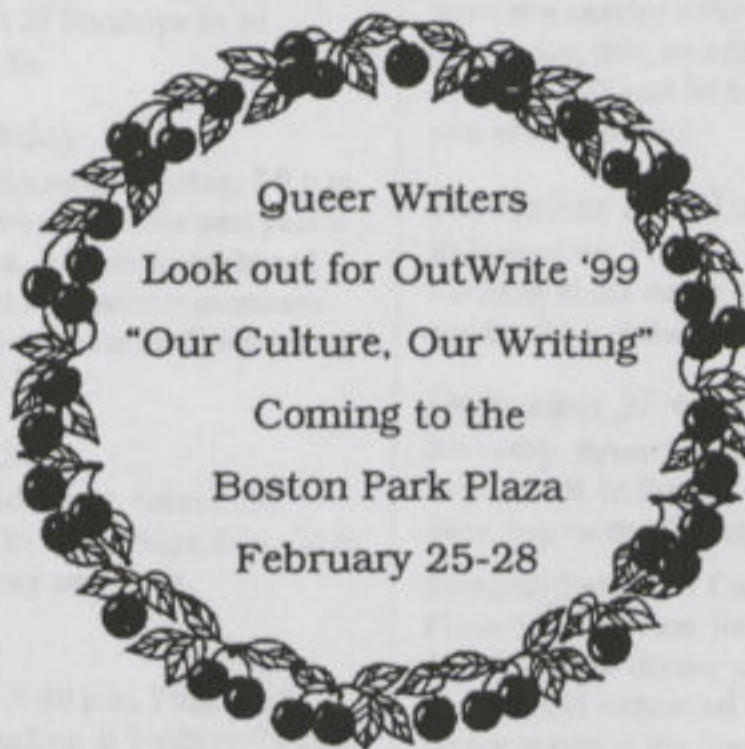
### January 26 ♦ Tuesday

**BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner.** 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

**BiWomen mailing,** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. It's a great way to meet other women in a fun and relaxed atmosphere and it gets BiWomen out to readers across the world. Please join us.

### January 31 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch**, 1 p.m. Come meet new friends and old at Mucho Gusto (a big supporter of the Bi Conference). Cuban food and a bi-friendly atmosphere. 1174 Boylston St. near Mass Ave. Nearest T stop is Auditorium on the Green Line.



*Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.*

**The Bisexual Resource Guide 2000 will be available in January 1999.**

Order your copy now and be one of the first on your block to own it!

Send \$11.95

to:

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P.O. Box 400639,  
Cambridge, MA 02140

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Cambridge, MA  
02140**

**Such a deal!**

## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617 424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk.** 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### 2nd Thursdays:

**Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group.** 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612

**Bi Married Women's Support Group.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at 617-731-9060 for info.

### 3rd Thursdays:

**SpeakOut Meeting.** 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the Bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m. with the theme program starting at 8 p.m. Info: 617 354-0133.

# CALENDAR

## December 1 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center,** 7:30-9 p.m. Tonight's topic is "When Worlds Collide: Integrating Straight & Queer Lives." Call 617-354-8807 for info.

## December 2 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

## December 6 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. Our topic for the first hour will be "Surviving the Holidays." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in.

## December 9 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. This is the meeting where we review the past year's work, look ahead to the next, and elect new board members and officers. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

## December 10 ♦ Thursday

**Bi Rap** plays pool at The Hideaway, behind the Fresh Pond Bread & Circus in Cambridge, 8:00. Go to the second floor, no cover, pay per game.

## December 11 ♦ Friday

**Amatul's Tool Box Bi Cafe,** 6-10 p.m. Please join Amatul for an open-floor reading at ToolBox Central in Central Square, Cambridge. Bring your own words or the work of your fave Bi authors, read short excerpts over tea and munchies. Bring instruments to play upon if you desire, or tape/CD recordings by Bi artists. Call 617-497-9215 x1 or amatul@uses.org for directions. \$3 donation for food/tea, etc.

## December 12 ♦ Saturday

**BBWN 3rd Annual Holiday House Party,** 8:00 p.m. Ananda and Amy are opening their home to us for the third year in a row to celebrate all of the holiday you can possibly imagine. Also this is the end of BBWN's fifteenth year so let's make sure it goes out with a bang. 9:00 Open mic, with entertainment by Annie Goglia, Amatul Hannan, Anoosh Jorjorian, and others. Call 776-1008 for directions. Cocktail attire is encouraged just for the fun of it. See you all there!



## December 15 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Tonight's topic is "I'll Be Bi for the Holidays." (See December 1.)

**Coming Out as Bisexual** 7-9pm (see December 2nd)

## December 19 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch,** 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Hazel's (formerly Cafe Moka) on Dartmouth St. in Boston, directly across the street from Back Bay station. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

## December 20 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Brunch/Matinee,** 11:30 a.m. ish. We'll find a good movie to see (most likely spot is at the Kendall Cinema) and meet at a nearby eatery. Ellyn is organizing this, so call her at 617-926-8737 and let her know you are interested.



## December 22 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center,** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Meeting at the center and then going someplace nearby for a social evening. Call 617-354-8807.

## December 27 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1 p.m. at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont St. in Boston's South End. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

**Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner,** 5 - 7 p.m. Please Note new time. Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.

## December 31 ♦ Tuesday

**First Night!** Biversity will begin the New Year's celebration with vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. From there, the group will decide what First Night festivities to partake in. Buddha's Delight is on Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

## January 3 ♦ Sunday

**Bi Space.** 7-9 p.m. (see December 6th). First hour's topic: "Backrubs for Bis: the Stress Reduction Bi Space." Come share and learn tips for reducing and managing stress in your life and participate in an optional backrub chain.

## January 5 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center,** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 354-8807 for topic.

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11